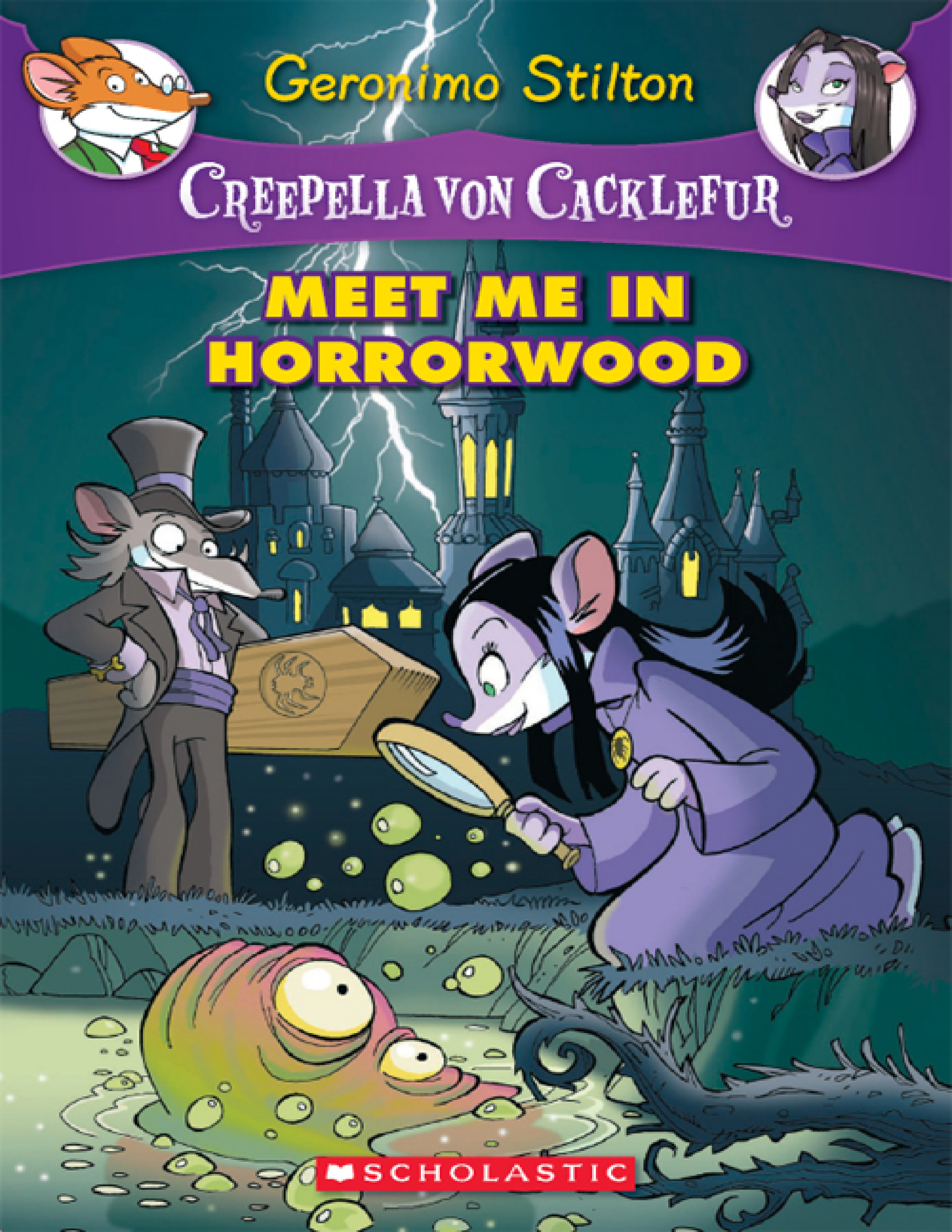
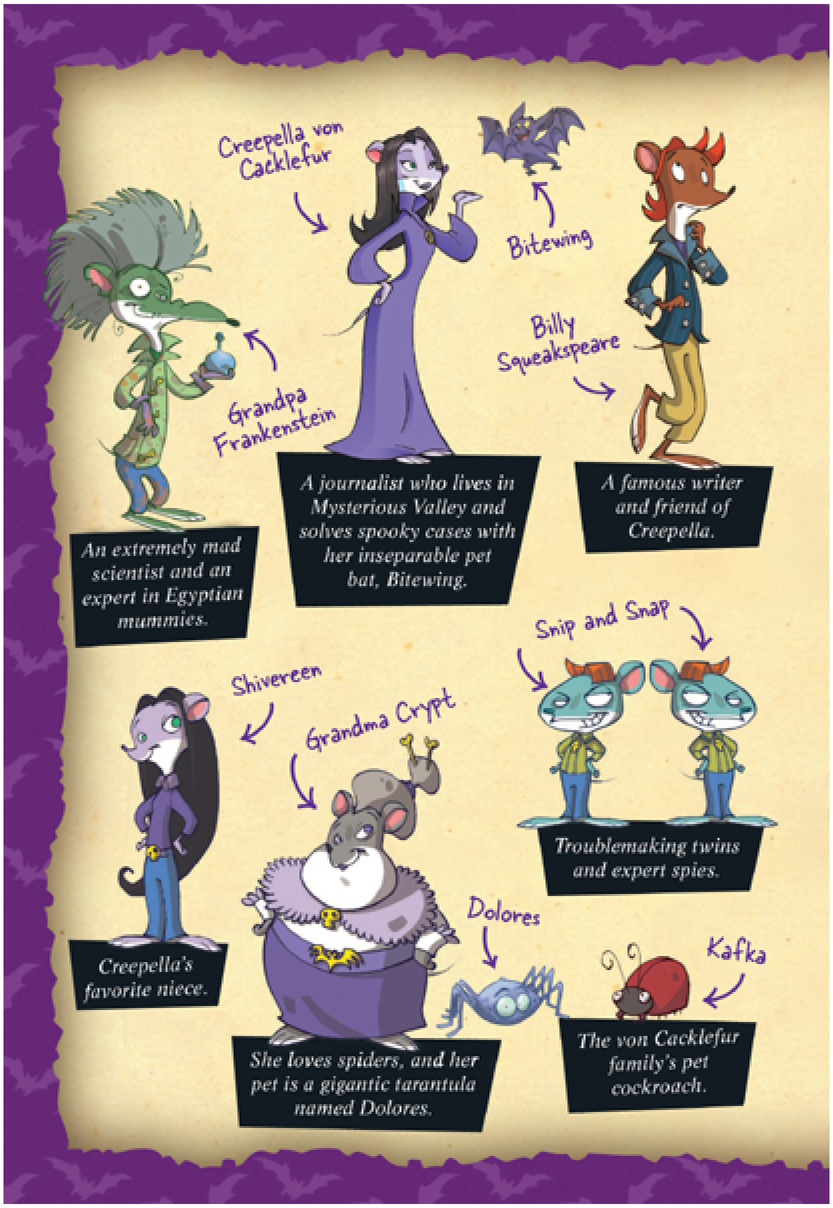
Geronimo Stilton

CREEPELLA VON CACKLEFUR

MEET ME IN HORRORWOOD



SCHOLASTIC


Creepella von Cacklefur
Bitewing
Grandpa Frankenstein
Billy Squeakspeare
Snip and Snap
Shivereen
Grandma Crypt
Dolores
Kafka

An extremely mad scientist and an expert in Egyptian mummies.

A journalist who lives in Mysterious Valley and solves spooky cases with her inseparable pet bat, Bitewing.

A famous writer and friend of Creepella.

Troublemaking twins and expert spies.

Creepella's favorite niece.

She loves spiders, and her pet is a gigantic tarantula named Dolores.

The von Cacklefur family's pet cockroach.

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THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG . . .

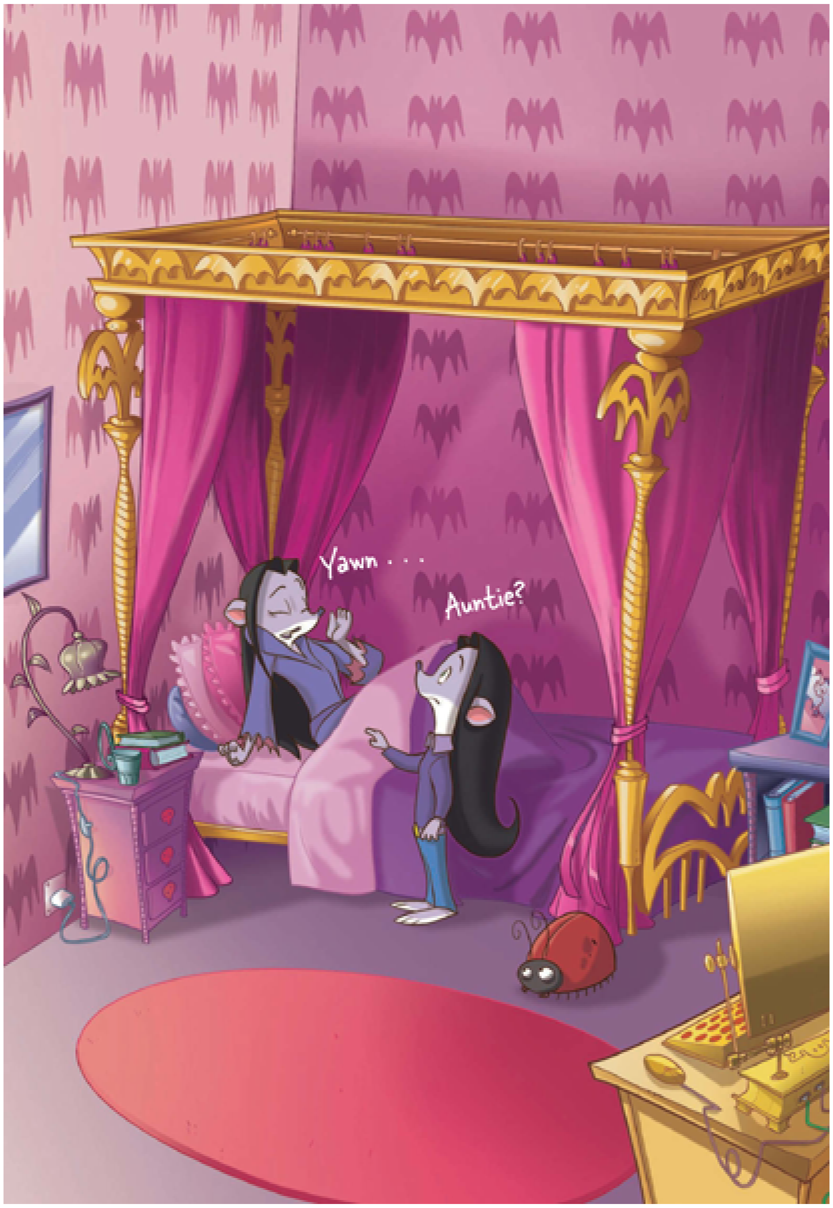
"Auntie?"

Creepella von Cacklefur slowly opened her eyes. Someone was tugging on her blanket.

"Auntie, wake up! We've got a problem!"

Creepella propped herself up on her pillows and YAWNED. Her niece, Shivereen, was standing by the bed next to her. She looked very worried.

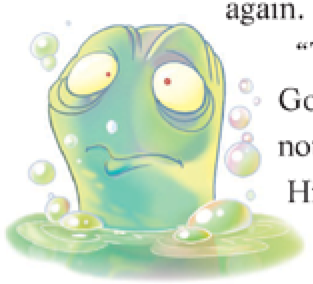
Kafka, the von Cacklefur family's pet cockroach, slept at the foot of Creepella's bed. He slowly opened his beady eyes. Then he wiggled his antennae to greet Shivereen.


Yawn . . .
Auntie?

Creepella saw the first rays of the sun rising in the **GLOOMY** sky. Cacklefur Castle was as quiet as a tomb.

She felt very sleepy. Last night, a magnificent full moon shone in the sky. It had inspired her to write an article about **werewolves** for *The Shivery News*. Being published in the most famouse newspaper in Mysterious Valley was a great achievement. Creepella had worked late into the night, and now she didn't feel like waking up. But Shivereen looked like she had something **important** to say.

"What's wrong?" Creepella asked, yawning again.



"There's something wrong with Gorgo!" Shivereen cried. "He's not stinking like he always does. His **GREEN SLIME** coloring has faded. And he won't eat!"

Mr. M.'s Monster Catalog

GORGO

Cacklefur Castle's moat monster

BIRTHPLACE: A stinky swamp that's impossible to find

AGE: Between 15 and 150 monster years

SIZE: Always changing

FAVORITE FOOD: Eats everything, but prefers rotten food with vintage rust

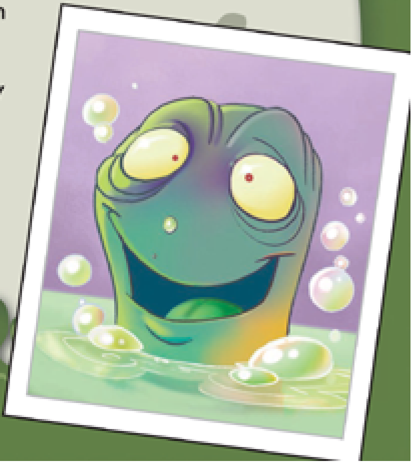
FAVORITE COLOR: Slime green

FAVORITE PERFUME: Essence of Smelly Socks

FAVORITE BOOK: *Green Eggs and Hammers*

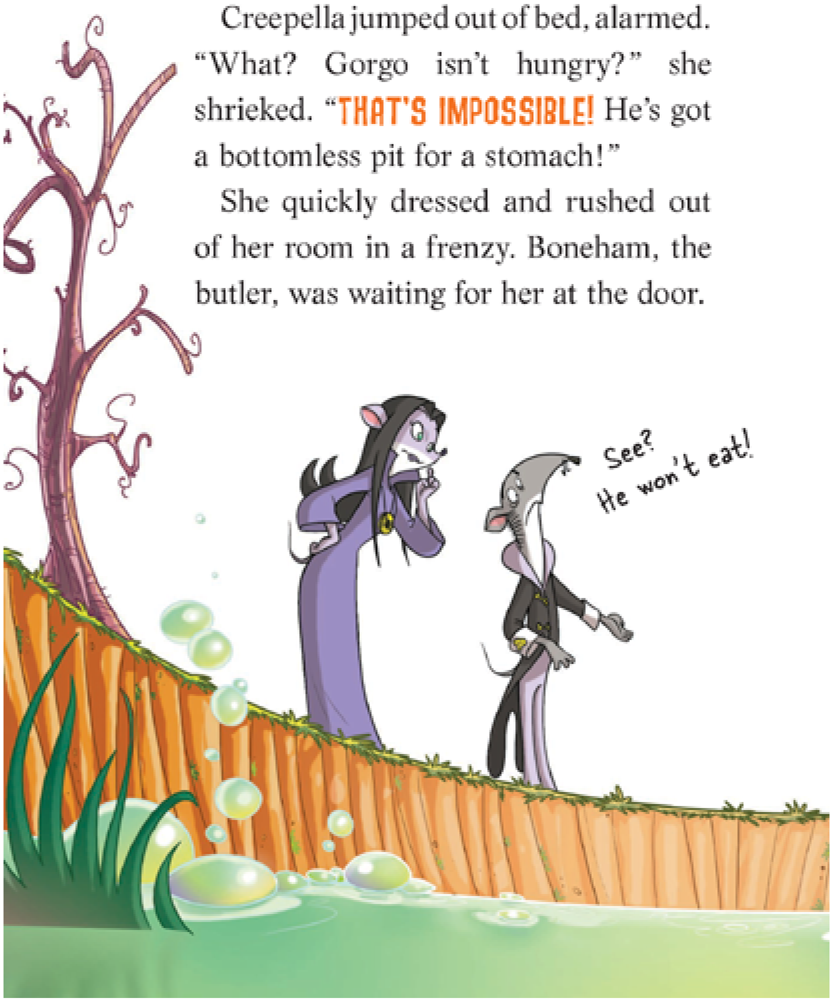
IDENTIFYING MARKS: Green boils all over his body

It appears there may be only one other creature of this type in the entire world — a female monster.



Creepella jumped out of bed, alarmed. "What? Gorgo isn't hungry?" she shrieked. "**THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!** He's got a bottomless pit for a stomach!"

She quickly dressed and rushed out of her room in a frenzy. Boneham, the butler, was waiting for her at the door.

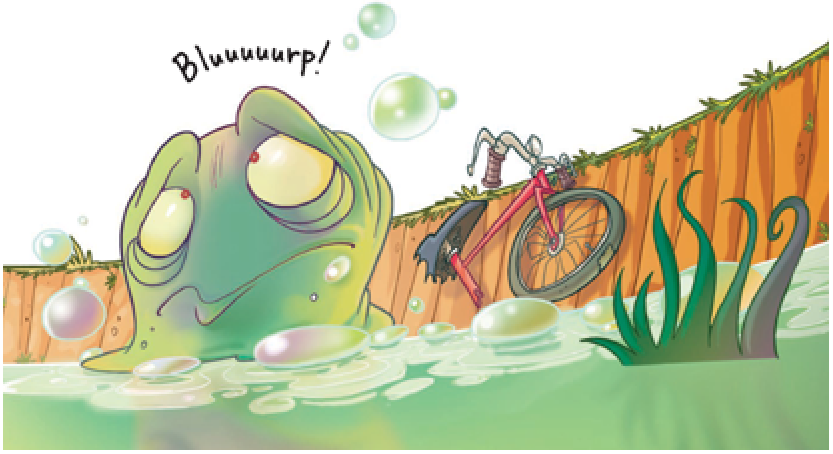

See?
He won't eat!

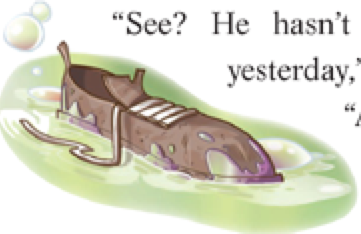
"Miss Creepella, the situation is serious," he said. "Please FOLLOW ME!"

They quickly reached the moat, where the monster lived. Boneham threw a rusty old bicycle into the muddy water. Bicycles were one of Gorgo's favorite foods.

"BLUUUUUUUUURP!"

Gorgo let out a lonely cry. He didn't even look at the bicycle.





"See? He hasn't eaten anything since yesterday," Boneham said sadly. "All he does is cry out with heartbreaking **bluuuuuuurps**!"

Creepella shook her head, worried. "I've never seen him like this," she agreed. "Did you try throwing him an old, **DISGUSTING**, smelly shoe?"

Boneham nodded. "I did. He didn't even notice it. It's still **floating** down there!"

"This is serious," Creepella said. "What if we try a box of delicious **RUSTY** nails?"

"I already did," the butler replied. "He didn't touch one!"

Creepella frowned. "This is *very* serious. How about a nice bag of **ROTTEN** garbage? I'm sure he could never resist that!"

The butler sighed. "No. He wouldn't even taste it!"

"This is very, very, very serious," Creepella said thoughtfully. "There's only one solution."

"You're not thinking —"

"I am!" Creepella cried. "We need a family reunion!"

The butler turned PALE. "Please think this through, Miss Creepella," he said. "Remember the last reunion? It was so LIVELY, we had to rebuild an entire wing of the castle!"

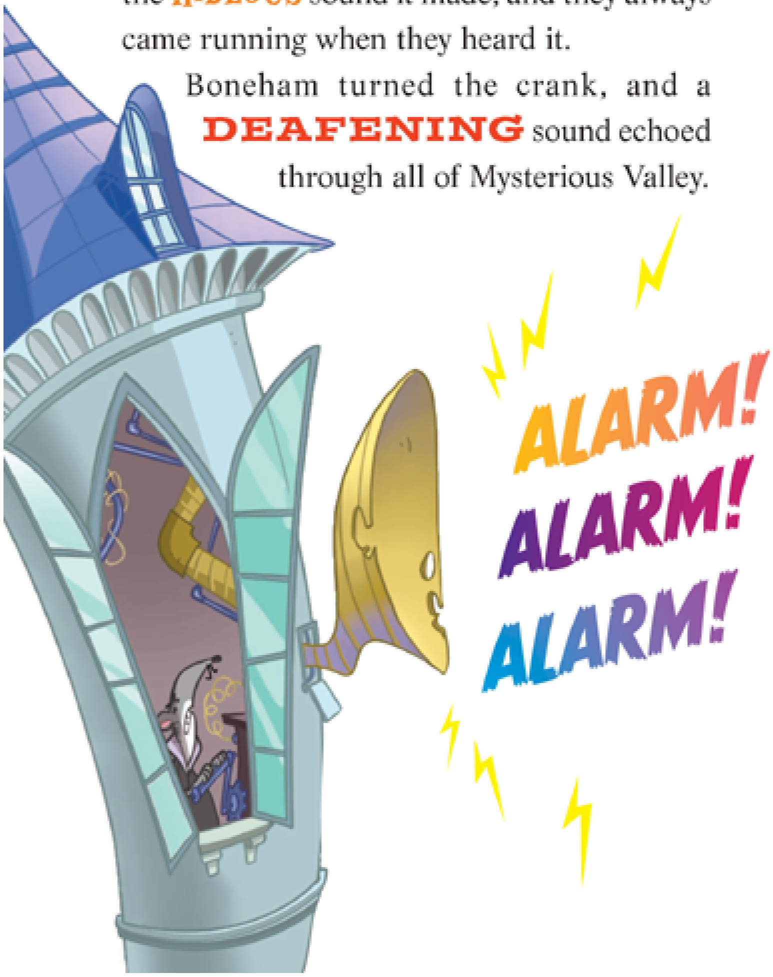
Creepella's green eyes sparkled. "That was a FUN party! But there won't be any fun this time. We have a very serious problem to solve. Gorgo is SICK!"

FAMILY REUNION

The butler ran up the **STAIRS** to the top of the tallest tower in Cacklefur Castle, **Bitewing's tower**. Grandpa Frankenstein's inventions were piled high in the small room. He created them all when he was a young mouse learning his trade at the Weird Wizard Shop.

Boneham went into the gloomy room and walked over to a large **MACHINE** covered by a heavy cloth. He pulled the **MOLDY** cloth aside to reveal a strange contraption, the **Cacklefur Emergency Alarm**. Everyone in the von Cacklefur family knew the HIDEOUS sound it made, and they always came running when they heard it.

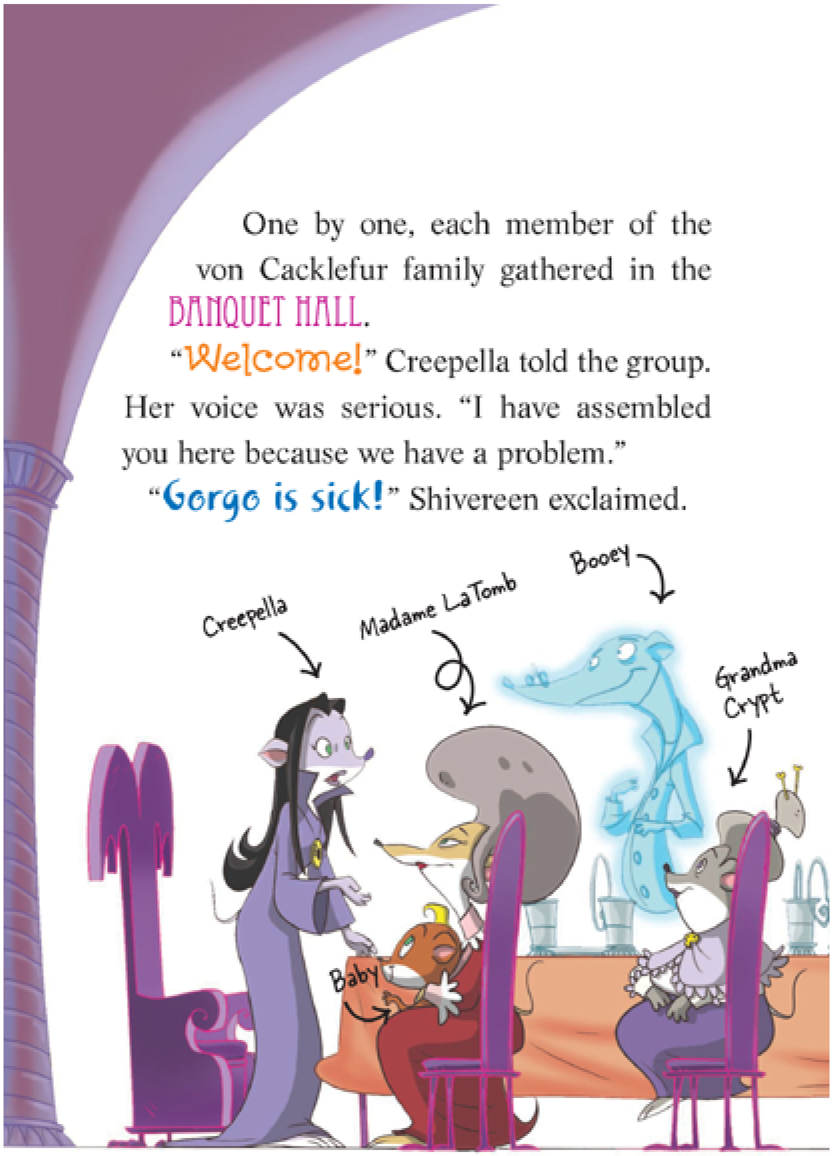
Boneham turned the crank, and a **DEAFENING** sound echoed through all of Mysterious Valley.


ALARM!
ALARM!
ALARM!

One by one, each member of the von Cacklefur family gathered in the BANQUET HALL.

"Welcome!" Creepella told the group. Her voice was serious. "I have assembled you here because we have a problem."

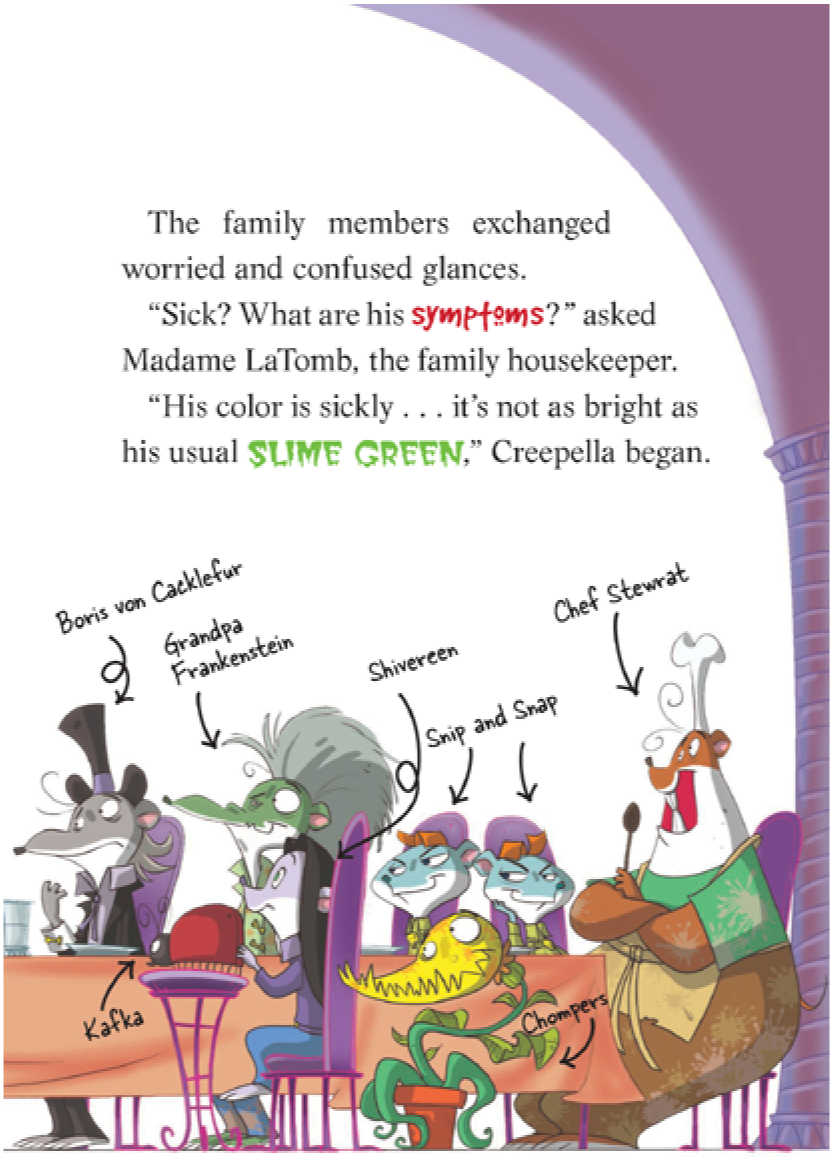
"Gorgo is sick!" Shivereen exclaimed.


Creepella
Madame LaTomb
Booey
Grandma Crypt
Baby

The family members exchanged worried and confused glances.

"Sick? What are his **symptoms**?" asked Madame LaTomb, the family housekeeper.

"His color is sickly . . . it's not as bright as his usual **SLIME GREEN**," Creepella began.


Boris von Cacklefur
Grandpa Frankenstein
Shivereen
Snip and Snap
Chef Stewrat
Kafka
Chompers

"Well, it's delightfully FOGGY outside," said Creepella's father, Boris von Cacklefur. "It's normal to have pale coloring in this weather."

"Maybe, but there's something else," Creepella went on. "He makes a very sad noise. It's an odd 'bluuuuuurp' that brings TEARS to my eyes."

Howler, the were-canary, peeked out of Madame LaTomb's puffy hair.

"Bah! So much worry about nothing!" the man-eating bird chirped. "He's probably just got an upset stomach."

"Impossible!" Shivereen told him. "He's eaten nothing since yesterday!"

"Good gravy!" exclaimed Chef Stewrat. "Not even my stew?"

Creepella shook her head.

The banquet hall got very quiet. Everyone was very worried about Gorgo.

Then a **LOUD** voice rang out. “Hmm. Pale color . . . a sad cry . . . no appetite . . . but of course! The symptoms are clear!”

The voice belonged to Grandma Crypt. She jumped up on her chair.

“I know what’s the matter with Gorgo!”

Every creature in the hall looked at her — even **KAFKA**, the pet cockroach, and **CHOMPERS**, the meat-eating plant.

“It’s just like the main character of the last book I read, *Without You My Heart Molds*, written by Billy Squeakspeare,” Grandma Crypt announced. “Gorgo is in **LOVE**!”

“Gorgo is in love?” everyone asked at once. “In love with whom?”

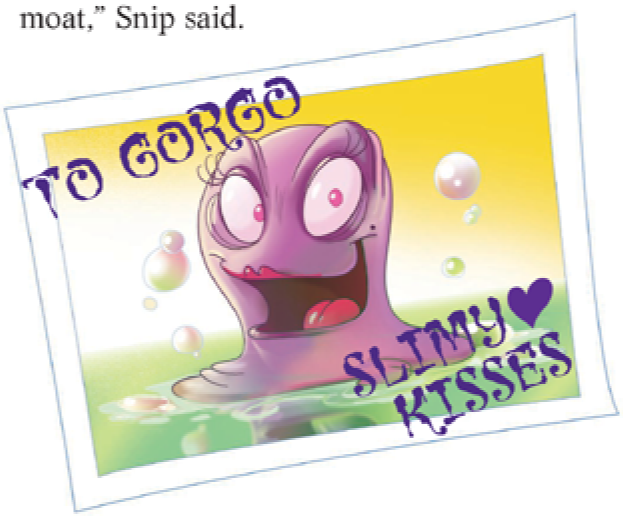
Grandma Crypt shrugged. “I have no idea.”

"**We do! We do!**" chanted Snip and Snap, the troublemaking twins. "If we tell you, can we get a second serving of stew cake?"

Creepella scowled at her nephews. "Cake? Gorgo is **SICK** and the only thing you can think of is cake? You'd better tell us what you know right now!"

Snip took a **POSTCARD** from Snap's pocket and handed it to Creepella.

"Here, we found it on the bank of the moat," Snip said.



Mr. M.'s Monster Catalog

BLOBBINA

Female monster and Horrorwood film actress

Education: Swamp School of Drama

Age: A lady never reveals her age!

Size: Big, but perfect for a slime monster

Favorite Food: Wilted flowers

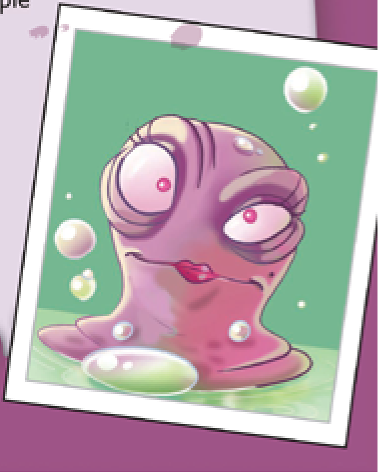
Favorite Color: Pale pink

Favorite Perfume: Moldy Violets

Favorite Book: *Heart of Mud* by Billy Squeakspeare

Identifying Marks: A dark purple mole by her mouth

It appears there may be only one other creature of this type in the entire world — a male monster.



"Gorgo really is in love!" Boris von Cacklefur exclaimed happily.

"And she's a MOVIE STAR!" added Grandpa Frankenstein.

Madame LaTomb sighed. "It's so romantic. As a young girl, I, too, was in love with a famouse movie star. Humphrey Bograt was so handsome!"

The crabby canary snorted. "LOVE! What a waste of time."

"Look who's talking," Creepella said, POINTING at Howler's beak. "Did you forget how you fell head over wings for that saucy parakeet last year?"

The canary blushed and dove into the thickest part of Madame LaTomb's hair.

Booey the ghost had a faraway look on his see-through face. "One can never forget love," he said. "It's almost better than an old RUINED castle."

"Yes, better than a velvet-covered CASKET," added Boris.

"Or a great big pot of ten-year-old STEW," Chef Stewrat said dreamily.

Creepella turned to Grandpa Frankenstein. "What about you, Grandfather?" she asked him. "Have you ever been LOVESICK like Gorgo?"

"Yes, my dear," he replied. "Once, a lovely MUMMY broke my heart. But then I met Grandma Crypt, and the rest is history."

The entire hall filled with deep sighs.

AH, LOVE!

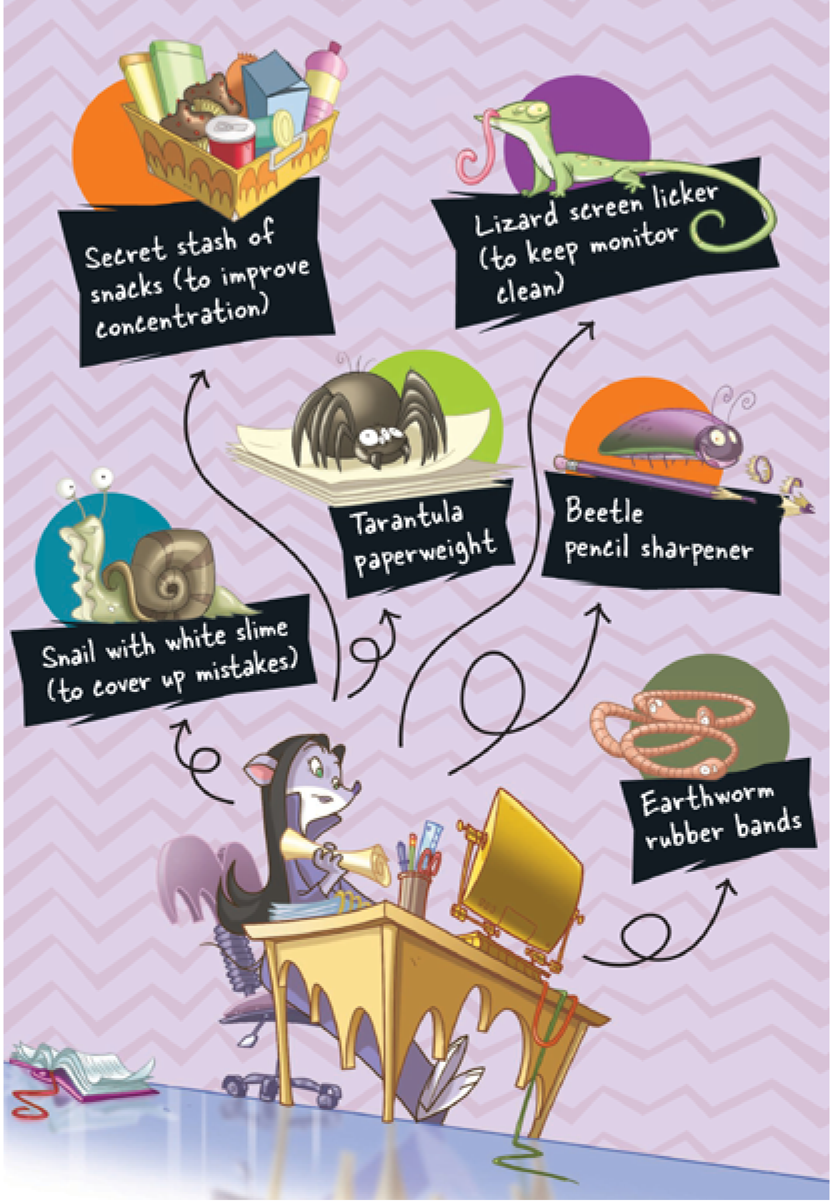
A LOVE LETTER

Everyone started talking at once. They all wanted to help Gorgo win the love of his dreams.

Grandma Crypt was the family's best expert on love stories and remedies for broken hearts. "He needs to write her a nice love **LETTER**," she decided.

"Gorgo is too shy to write to her," Boris pointed out. He looked right at his daughter. "My dear Creepella, can you help him?"

"***I'm on it!***" she replied. "I'm going straight to my room to write the letter."


Secret stash of snacks (to improve concentration)
Lizard screen licker (to keep monitor clean)
Tarantula paperweight
Beetle pencil sharpener
Snail with white slime (to cover up mistakes)
Earthworm rubber bands

A MONSTROUS LEADING LADY

They found Sam Shivers inside his trailer, drinking a glass of swamp juice. He was staring sadly at a poster of Blobbina on the wall.

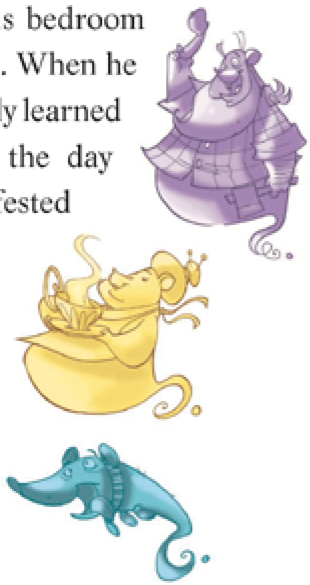
Creepella stuck her head through the open doorway. "May I come in?"

Shivers didn't answer. Instead, he sighed and wiped a tear from his furry cheek with his handkerchief.

Bitewing flew into the trailer and circled the director's head. "*What's wrong? What's wrong? What's wrong?*"

A DINNER INVITATION FOR BILLY

While Creepella searched for Blobbina, Billy Squeakspeare, the famouse AUTHOR, was trying to take a nap in his bedroom at Squeakspeare Mansion. When he inherited the mansion, Billy learned he had to sleep during the day because the place was infested with 13 GHOSTS.



Every night at the stroke of midnight, the ghosts would start cleaning the house. This woke Billy up every time, and he could never get back to sleep. But napping during the day wasn't always easy, either. For instance, today someone kept ringing and ringing the doorbell. Billy reluctantly DRAGGED himself out of bed. A loud voice was calling out from behind the door.

"Express letter for Mr. Squeakspeare!"

"Wh-who is it?" Billy asked in a sleepy voice. He still had his nightcap on his head.

"I'm the messenger from Rattenbaum Mansion," the visitor replied. "I'm looking for the famouse Mr. Billy Squeakspeare!"

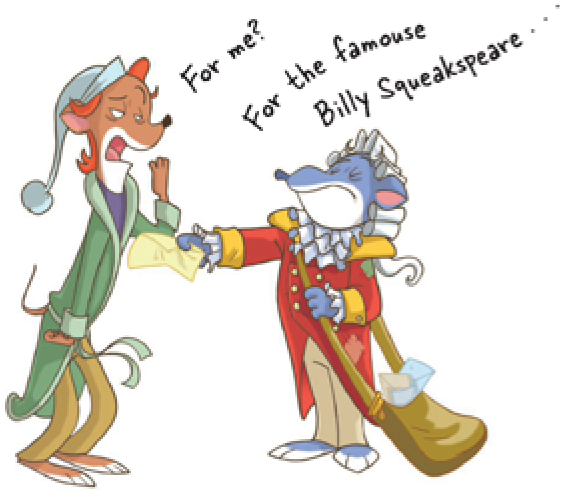
Billy opened the door and found himself facing a BIZARRE rodent wearing a strange costume. A tall white wig was perched on his head. His red uniform was trimmed in gold, but it was covered in patches, and MOTHS were flying out of it.

"Are you the famouse Mr. Billy —" began the messenger.

Billy **CUT** him short. "Yes, yes, that's me, but —"

Before he could finish the sentence, the rodent gave him an old, **YELLOWED** envelope. Then he strutted away with his snout up in the air.

Puzzled, Billy turned the envelope in his hand. His great-great-great-uncle William,


For me?
For the famouse Billy Squeakspeare . . .

the thirteenth GHOST in the mansion, appeared next to him.

"Nephew, is that envelope for me?" he asked.

"Actually, it's for me, from the Rattinbottoms . . . or maybe the Rottendams . . . or the Rittanbams . . ." Billy replied.

William looked excited. "Do you mean the Rattenbaums? They're on my WEDDING list!"

"W-wedding?" Billy stammered. He was a very NERVOUS mouse. "Who's getting married?"

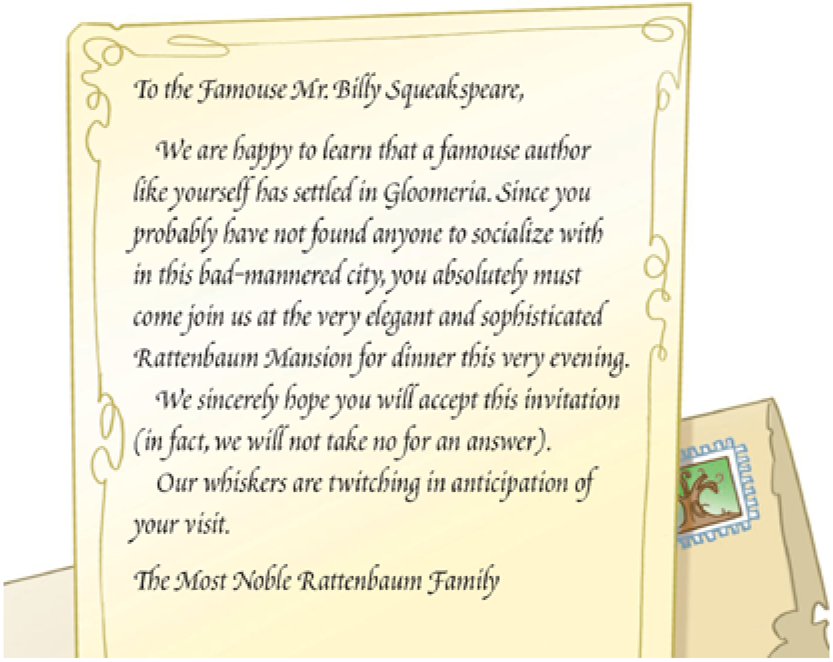
"You, of course!" William said in his booming voice. "I jotted down the names of all the single female rodents in Mysterious Valley. There are three in the Rattenbaum household!"

Billy looked TERRIFIED. "Wh-what are you talking about? I'm too young to get married!"

"'Young'? You've already got COBWEBS on your face," said his great-great-great-uncle. "Now hurry up and open the envelope!"

With a sigh, Billy pulled out the letter.

"You know, I've heard that the Rattenbaum triplets are really *delightful*," William



To the Famouse Mr. Billy Squeakspeare,

We are happy to learn that a famouse author like yourself has settled in Gloomeria. Since you probably have not found anyone to socialize with in this bad-mannered city, you absolutely must come join us at the very elegant and sophisticated Rattenbaum Mansion for dinner this very evening.

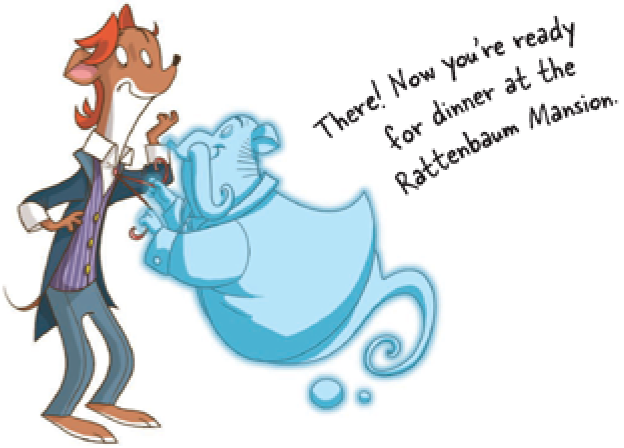
We sincerely hope you will accept this invitation (in fact, we will not take no for an answer).

Our whiskers are twitching in anticipation of your visit.

The Most Noble Rattenbaum Family

assured him. He slapped Billy on the back, but his ghostly paw went right through him. "It would make me so happy if you would settle down and MARRY a nice rodent. That way, you'll give me a little nephew who will grow up in this mansion."

Billy had no choice. There was no use ARGUING — his uncle would hound him about it for DAYS! So he put on his BEST suit and tie and got ready to meet the triplets.


There! Now you're ready for dinner at the Rattenbaum Mansion.

FILTHY RICH OR JUST PRETENDING?

Billy rang the BELL of the Rattenbaum Mansion. He expected to hear the sound of musical chimes. Instead, he heard an earsplitting clattering sound, like a bunch of pots and pans banging together.

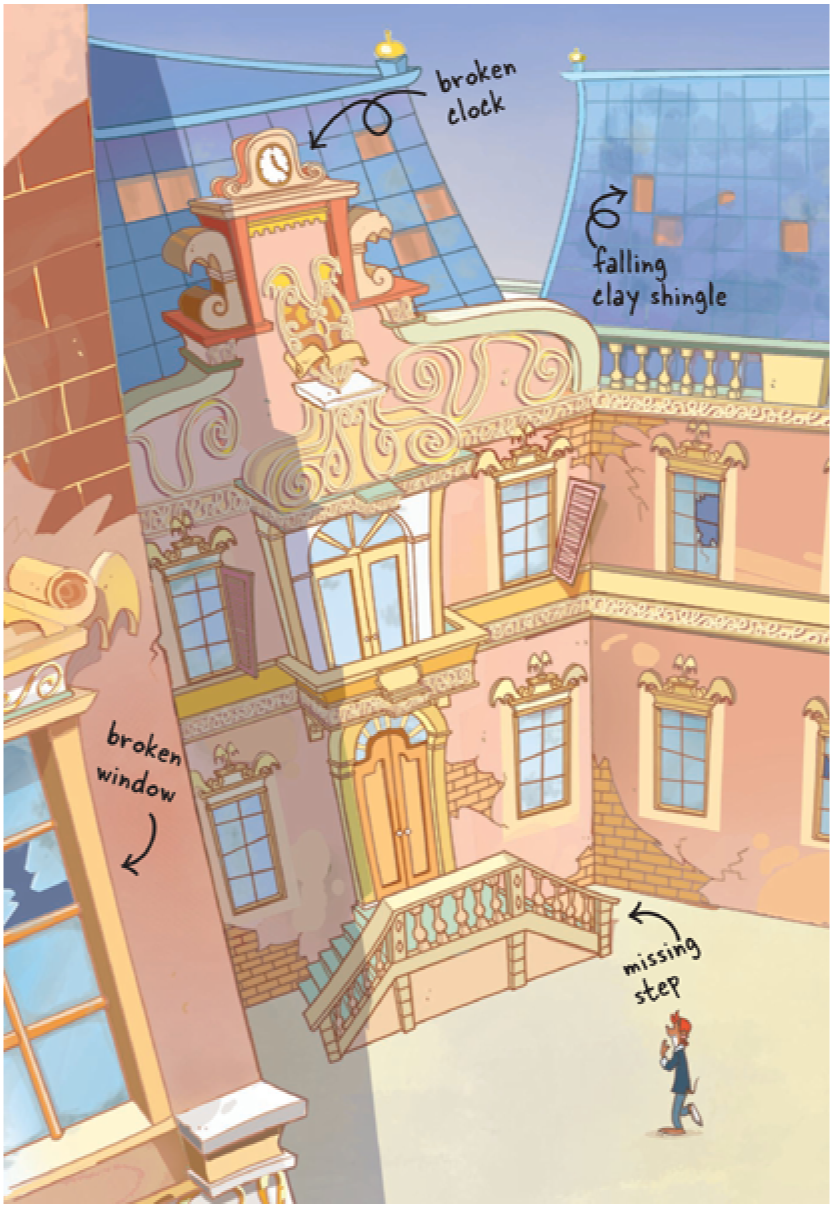
BANG BANG BANG BANG BANG BANG

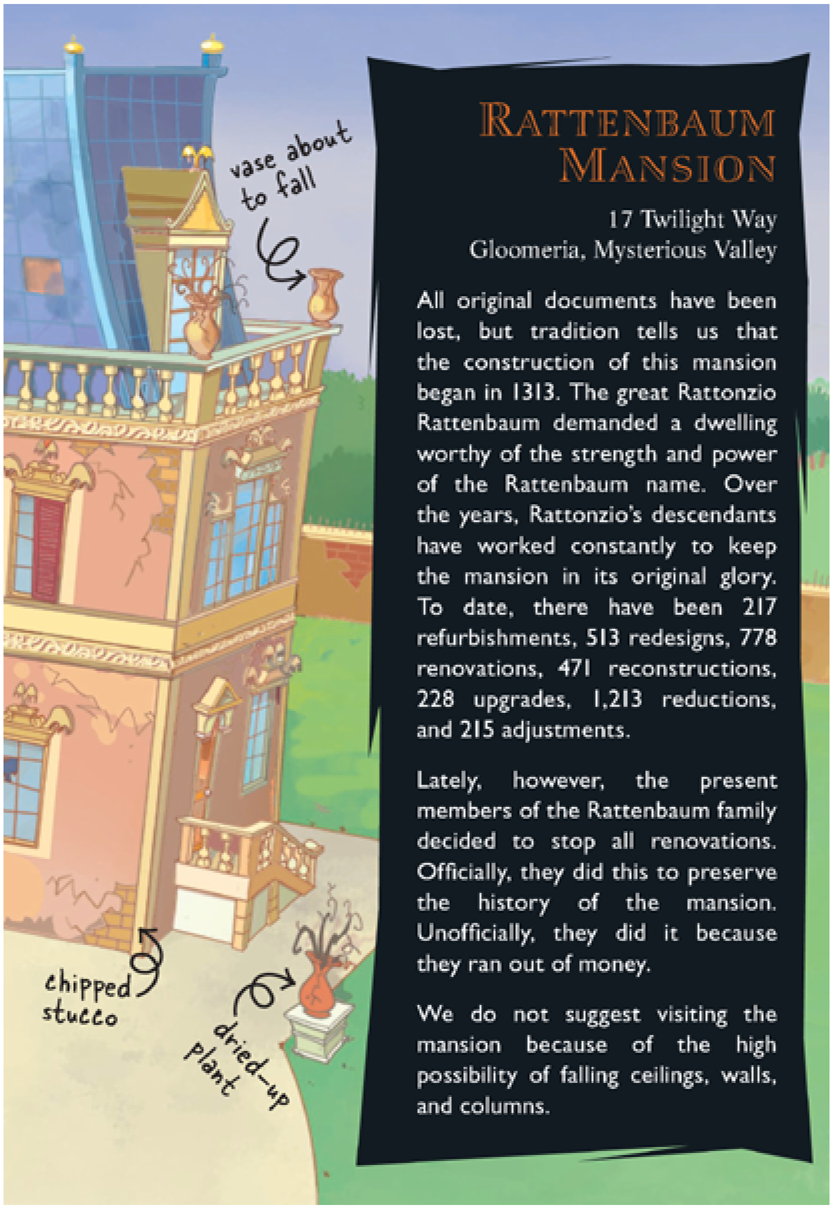
Billy jumped back and screamed loudly. Then he realized it was just the bell. Embarrassed, he looked around, hoping nobody had seen him acting like a scaredy-mouse.

The outside of the mansion was dark, SILENT, and empty. A few scraggly trees covered in GREEN mold stuck up here and there. THORNY bushes wrapped around the tree trunks. The decorative columns on top of the mansion's towers looked like they were going to collapse at any moment. Loose window shutters banged back and forth in the wind.

"I must have the wrong address," Billy muttered. "This house looks like it's been deserted for years!"

He was about to leave when he heard an eerie creak and the door slowly opened. Then a gray PAW reached through the doorway, grabbed him by the collar, and dragged him inside.


broken clock
falling clay shingle
broken window
missing step



RATTENBAUM MANSION

17 Twilight Way
Gloomeria, Mysterious Valley

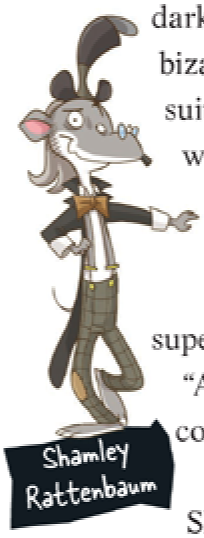
All original documents have been lost, but tradition tells us that the construction of this mansion began in 1313. The great Rattonzio Rattenbaum demanded a dwelling worthy of the strength and power of the Rattenbaum name. Over the years, Rattonzio's descendants have worked constantly to keep the mansion in its original glory. To date, there have been 217 refurbishments, 513 redesigns, 778 renovations, 471 reconstructions, 228 upgrades, 1,213 reductions, and 215 adjustments.

Lately, however, the present members of the Rattenbaum family decided to stop all renovations. Officially, they did this to preserve the history of the mansion. Unofficially, they did it because they ran out of money.

We do not suggest visiting the mansion because of the high possibility of falling ceilings, walls, and columns.

"Hurry up! Get in! You're letting in the COLD!" snapped the gray-furred rodent. Do you know how much heating costs these days?"

Billy found himself in a chilly and dark entrance hall, snout-to-snout with a bizarre-looking rodent. He wore a black suit that had once been ELEGANT, but was now covered with patches. A squashed top hat sat on his head.



"Good day, Master Bobby," the rodent said. "Welcome to our superluxurious mansion!"

"Actually, my name is Billy," the author corrected him.

The gray rodent ignored him. "I am Shamley Rattenbaum, lord of the mansion! And these are my wonderful, marvelous, enchanting granddaughters."

Three rodents in evening gowns emerged from the shadows.

"Hi, I'm Tilly!"

"Hi, I'm Milly!"

"Hi, I'm Lilly!"

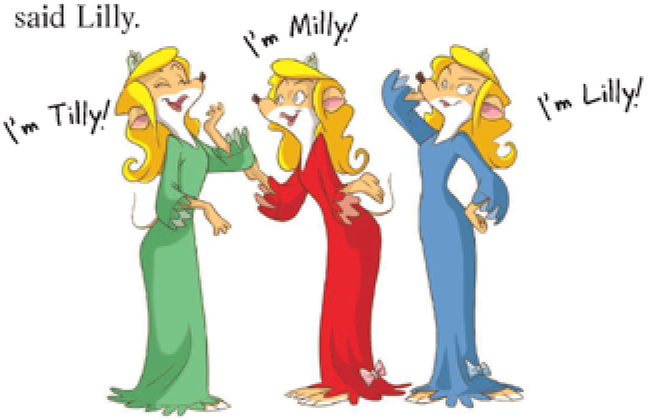
Billy cleared his throat and politely introduced himself.

"Ahem. Pleased to meet you. I am —"

Tilly interrupted him. "We know who you are!"

"Of course we do!" added Milly.

"We know EVERYTHING about you!" said Lilly.


I'm Tilly!
I'm Milly!
I'm Lilly!

"Of course, you know my granddaughters are HIGH-SOCIETY rodents," Shamley bragged. "In fact, they couldn't be any more HIGH SOCIETY than they are now."

Then he leaned toward Billy. They were so close their whiskers were touching.

"How about you?" he asked. "Are you a DUKE? Maybe a COUNT?"

Billy didn't know what to say. The Rattenbaums seemed to be obsessed with royalty!

"Let me guess," said Shamley. "You're a prince, right? I can tell just by looking at you!"

"Yes! I see it in your uncombed fur!" exclaimed Tilly.

"Yes! I see it in your CROOKED whiskers!" added Milly.

"Yes! I see it in your WRINKLY clothes!" concluded Lilly.

Shamley grabbed Billy by the collar again.

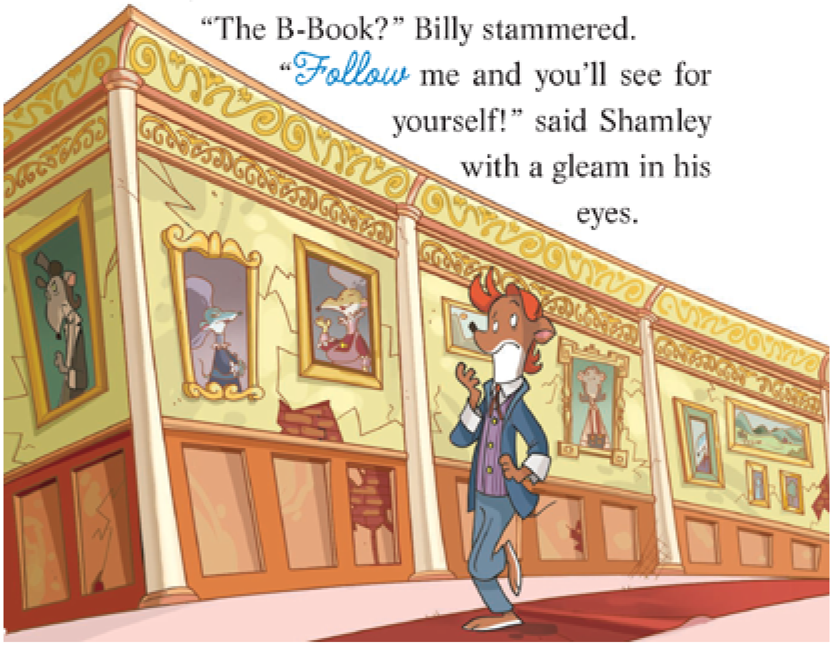
"Let's go! We can find your history upstairs."

The rodent pulled Billy down the dismal HALL. Dingy paintings of grouchy-looking rodents covered the walls.

"Here are the paintings of all of our HIGH-SOCIETY ancestors," Shamley said proudly. "We are the OLDEST family in the Valley. It's all in the Book."

"The B-Book?" Billy stammered.

"Follow me and you'll see for yourself!" said Shamley with a gleam in his eyes.



THE BOOK

Shamley stopped in front of a massive wooden door with a great big padlock on the knob. He searched his pockets and took out a key. Then he fiddled with the lock until the door opened.

Behind that door was another door secured with a chain and another lock. He opened that door to reveal a third small door with thirteen DEAD BOLTS. He opened the locks one by one. Finally, he pulled open the door and Billy saw a room behind it.

"Come!" he told Billy. "It's time to consult the Book!"

The timid mouse cautiously followed

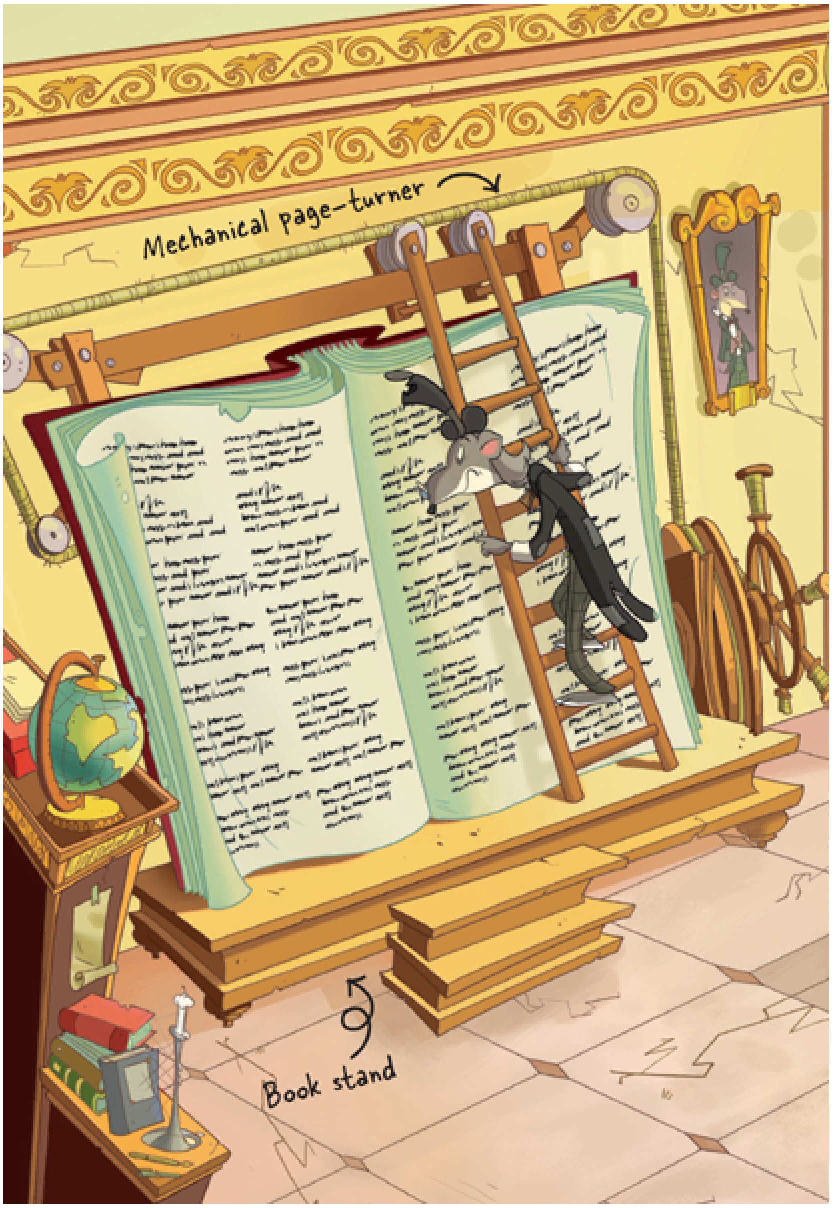
Shamley inside. The large room was filled with dusty objects that looked like they'd been around since the dawn of time. But the biggest item in the room was a truly **ENORMOUSE** book propped up on a stand.

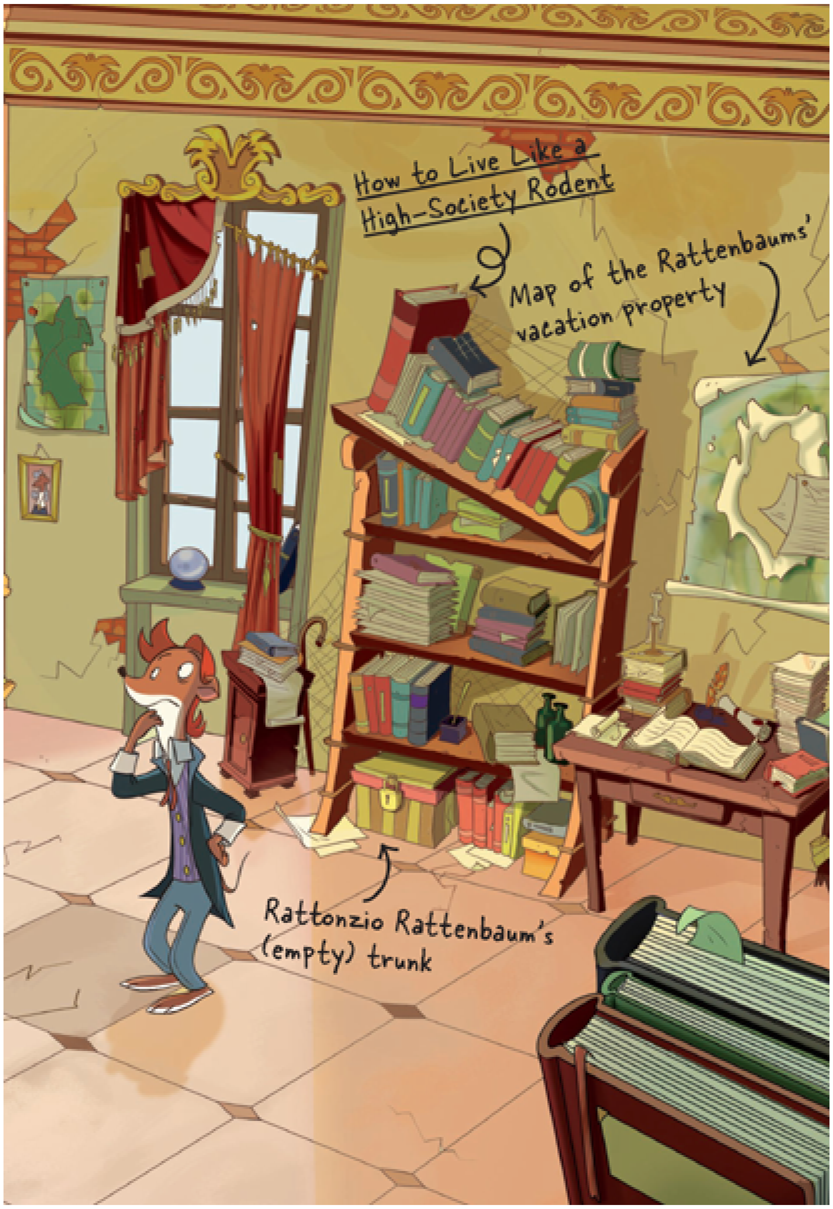
Shamley climbed up a tall ladder, fixed his **EYEGLASSES** on the tip of his snout, and began to turn the huge pages.

"Let's see . . . Squeakino . . . Squeaksley . . . Squeakstail . . . Hmm. I can't seem to find you," he said.

Billy was puzzled. "What are you **LOOKING** for?"

"Your name, of course!" Shamley replied. "The Book has the names of all of the royal and high-society rodents in Mysterious Valley. It also has a family tree for each name. Every lord, lady, count, countess, duke, duchess, prince, and princess is in here."


Mechanical page-turner
Book stand


How to Live Like a High-Society Rodent
Map of the Rattenbaums' vacation property
Rattonzio Rattenbaum's (empty) trunk

"Why should my name be here?" Billy asked.

"It's obvious! Because you're a NOBLE. Otherwise, how could I let you marry one of my VERY NOBLE granddaughters?"

"What? 'Marry'?" Billy cried. "*Bouncing bookmarks!* ***I DON'T WANT TO GET MARRIED!***"

Shamley pretended not to hear him. "Does your name have a *C* in it, by any chance?"

"Of course not!" Billy said.

"A *Z* ?" Shamley asked.

"Not that, either."

"How about a double *X* ?" Shamley tried.

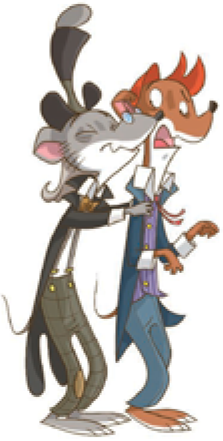
Billy sighed. "Not that, either!"

"Hmm. Let me take another look," Shamley told him.

No matter how hard he tried, Shamley could not find Billy's name in the Book. But that didn't bother him. He took a **pencil** from his pocket. "I can just make a little addition here," he muttered to himself. He wrote a name in the Book.

Bobby Squeekspir

"Look! I found proof!" Shamley cried. "You're a noble! High society from the tip of your noble nose to the end of your noble tail."



He JUMPED down from the ladder and hugged Billy. *"Welcome to our family!"*

Billy tried to get out of Shamley's grasp.

"It's always a pleasure to greet a G-U-E-S-T like you," Shamley added.

Once again, Billy was puzzled. Why was Shamley spelling out words?

His host explained. "And by G-U-E-S-T I mean Give Us Excellent Support Today." Shamley cleared his throat. "As you can see, the magnificent design of this mansion is in need of some REPAIR."

"*Some* repair?" Billy asked. "This place is a DISASTER area!" Right above his head, a tile was about to fall from the ceiling.

At that moment, a nasal voice ECHOED ECHOED ECHOED throughout the mansion.

"The butler is happy to announce that DINNER is being served!"

THE INVISIBLE DINNER

The ENTIRE Rattenbaum family was seated around the rickety table in the dining room.

Lady Fifi, the triplets' grandmother, wore a dress that was the height of fashion — fifty years ago. Now it was covered in Patches. She walked over to Billy and held out her paw for a kiss.

"En-enchanted, my lady," Billy said, giving a CLUMSY bow.

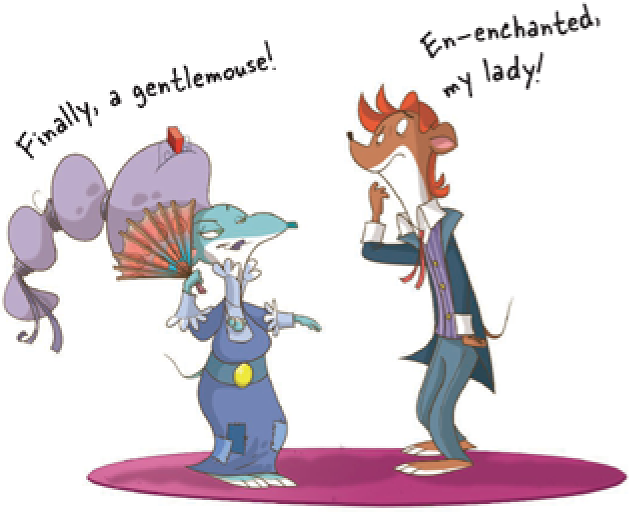
"Finally!" she exclaimed. "It's been years since we've had a GENTLEMOUSE as a guest. Tonight, we are serving a very SPECIAL dinner in your honor."

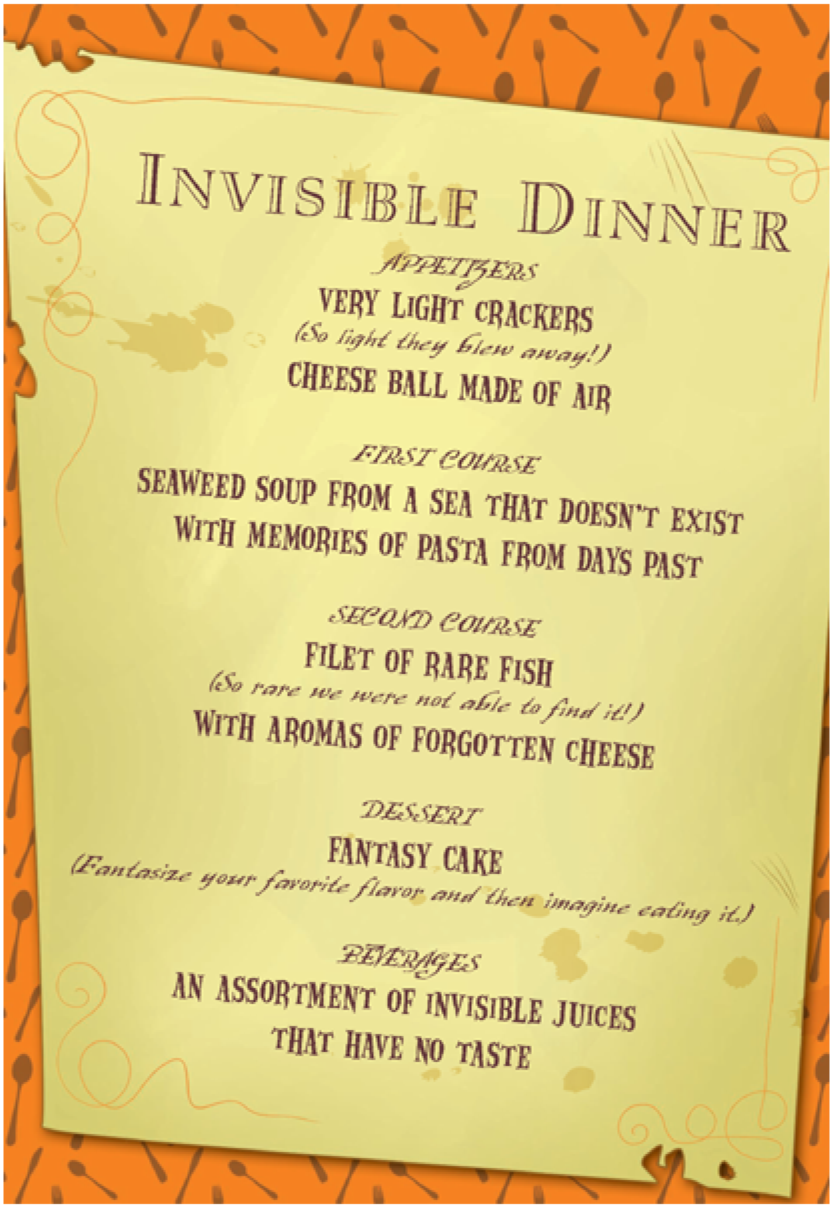
Shamley nudged one of his granddaughters. "Milly, bring us the menu!"

"Grandfather, I'm Tilly!" she protested.

"Sorry, my little *cheesenip*," her grandfather said sweetly. "You are all so much alike."

Tilly handed Billy a **TATTERED** menu. "Here it is. It's the latest fashion in high society: **INVISIBLE** dinner!"


Finally, a gentlemouse!
En-enchanted, my lady!



INVISIBLE DINNER

APPETIZERS

VERY LIGHT CRACKERS

(So light they blew away!)

CHEESE BALL MADE OF AIR

FIRST COURSE

SEAWEED SOUP FROM A SEA THAT DOESN'T EXIST

WITH MEMORIES OF PASTA FROM DAYS PAST

SECOND COURSE

FILET OF RARE FISH

(So rare we were not able to find it!)

WITH AROMAS OF FORGOTTEN CHEESE

DESSERT

FANTASY CAKE

(Fantasize your favorite flavor and then imagine eating it.)

BEVERAGES

AN ASSORTMENT OF INVISIBLE JUICES

THAT HAVE NO TASTE

The butler began to serve dinner. Billy noticed he was also the messenger from earlier that day. There was NOTHING on his serving tray, and the dishes remained EMPTY. But the Rattenbaums were excited about every serving.

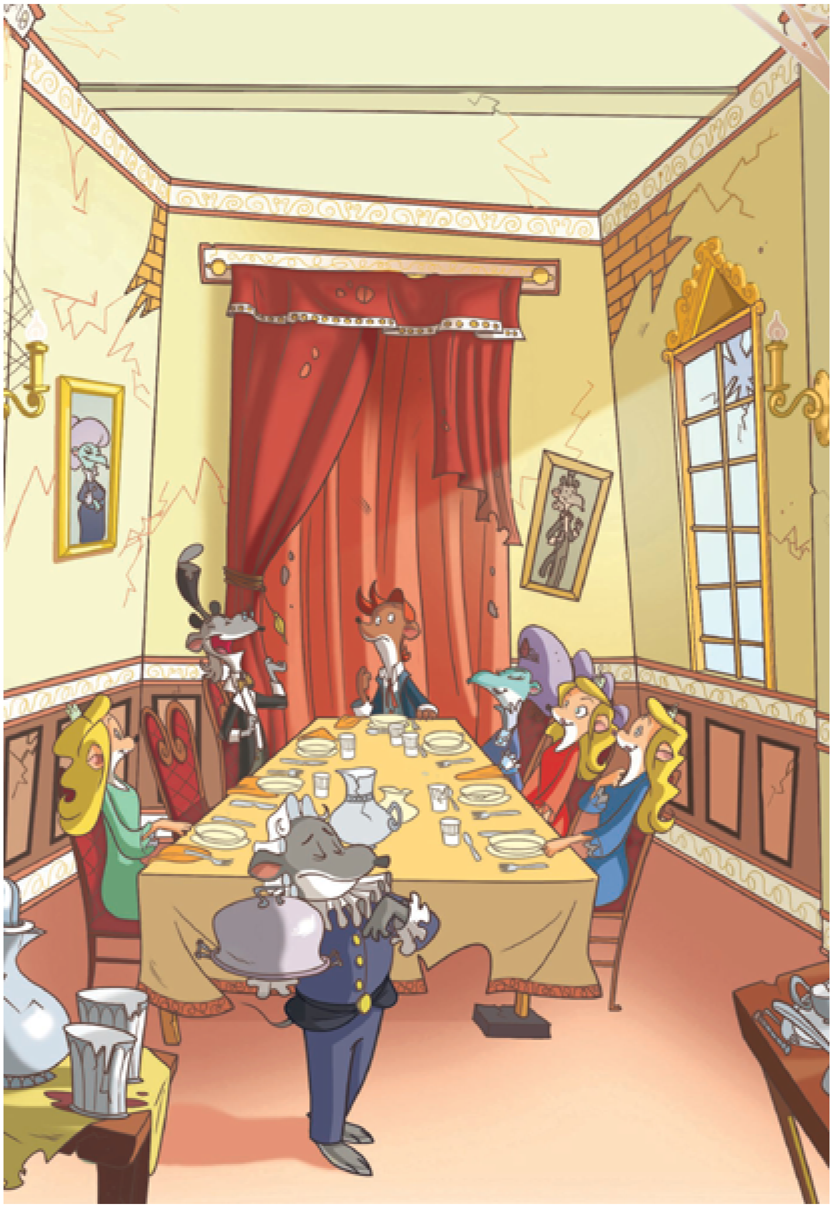
“How delicious!” the rodents exclaimed each time.

“Dear Shamley, please pour me some more of that juice,” said Lady Fifi. “It’s so refreshing.”

Shamley lifted the empty pitcher and pretended to pour something into his wife’s glass. Billy was STUNNED. Who ever heard of an invisible dinner? But most of all, he was hungry!

Just then, his cell phone rang.

Riiiiiiiing Riiiiiiiing Riiiiiiiing



Billy was glad to have an excuse to leave the table. He quickly made his escape to another room.

"**Hello, Billy-Willy?**" asked the voice at the other end.

"Creepella? Is that you?" Billy asked.

"Of course it's me!" she replied. "Are you home? How are the **13 GHOSTS**?"

"No, actually I'm . . ."

Creepella interrupted him. "It doesn't matter. I'm on a case and I need your help."

"A c-case?" Billy asked.

"Right!" she answered. "This case is very **MYSTERIOUS**. I asked the advice of a monster expert . . . but there's no time to talk. Meet me in front of Horrorwood Studios at the stroke of **MIDNIGHT**!"

"Th-the stroke of midnight?" That idea spooked Billy. But Creepella had already hung up.

The triplets caught up to him, SURROUNDING him.

"Bobby —" Tilly began.

"— who —" Milly continued

"— was that?" Lilly finished.

"That was my friend Creepella von Cacklefur," Billy replied. "Do you know her?"

The triplets began to SOB hysterically.

"Wh-what's wrong?" Billy asked.

"Don't mention that FLIRT!" Tilly said with a sigh.

"She's so UNPLEASANT!" Milly said with a sniff.

"And such a SHOW-OFF!" Lilly said with a sob.

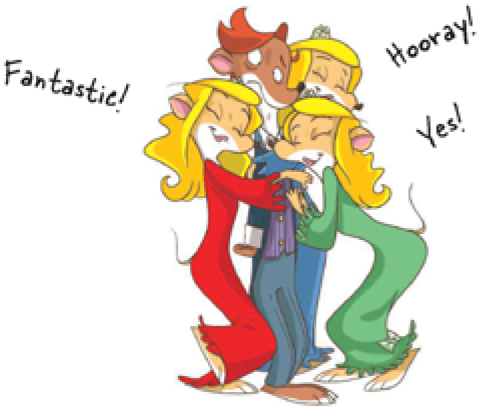
Lady Fifi approached them. "Did I hear correctly, Count Bobby? Are you leaving us?"

Billy nodded. "Actually, I have another appointment. I have to go to the MOVIE STUDIOS."

"Then I hope you will bring the girls with you," said Lady Fifi.

"Yes!" the triplets cried happily.

Billy gave up. He left the mansion with the three girls. They made a quick stop at his house so he could change his clothes. Then they headed toward **Horrorwood Studios**.


Fantastic!
Hooray!
Yes!

A MYSTERIOUS MIDNIGHT MEETING

"*Shrieks and Monsters*, scene sixteen, take one!" Sam Shivers yelled. "**Action!**"

The director had decided to shoot a scene without Blobbina in it. He was hoping the star of his film would appear before long. If not, his movie would be RUINED!

Billy entered the studio with the Rattenbaum triplets. The girls ran to Shivers, bubbling over with excitement.

"We want —" Tilly began.

"— to be —" Milly continued.

"— in your movie!" Lilly finished.

The director raised an eyebrow.

"Hmm," he said. "I might have a small part for you as extras."

The girls squealed with delight. "We're going to be actors!"

"I want a TRAILER all to myself," said Tilly.

"A golden dressing room for me," said Milly.

"A team of makeup artists just for me," added Lilly.

Just then, the studio clock began to toll midnight. Billy left the triplets with Sam Shivers and went to find Creepella.

I can't —
wait —
to start!

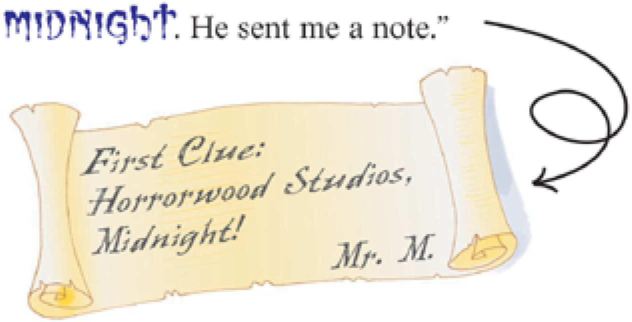
"Billy-Willy!" Creepella called out to him. "There you are. We must start the **INVESTIGATION** right away."

"What's going on?" Billy asked. "Why are we here so late?"

"Gorgo, our moat monster, is **IN LOVE** with Blobbina, Horrorwood's greatest star," Creepella explained quickly. "But she **DISAPPEARED**. And our monster expert—"

"M-monster expert?" Billy stammered.

"That's right," Creepella said. "Mr. M. is the greatest **MONSTER** expert in Mysterious Valley. He told me to be here exactly at **MIDNIGHT**. He sent me a note."



First Clue:
Horrorwood Studios,
Midnight!
Mr. M.

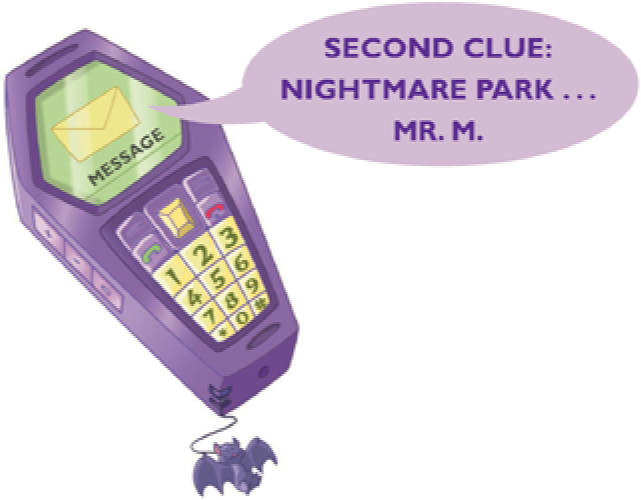
"What does this have to do with me?" Billy asked.

"I need a partner on this case," Creepella explained. **"Let's go!"**

The whole plan scared Billy. "Wh-where?"

Then he heard the gloomy sound of a funeral march. Creepella's cell phone was ringing.

"It's a message from Mr. M.!"

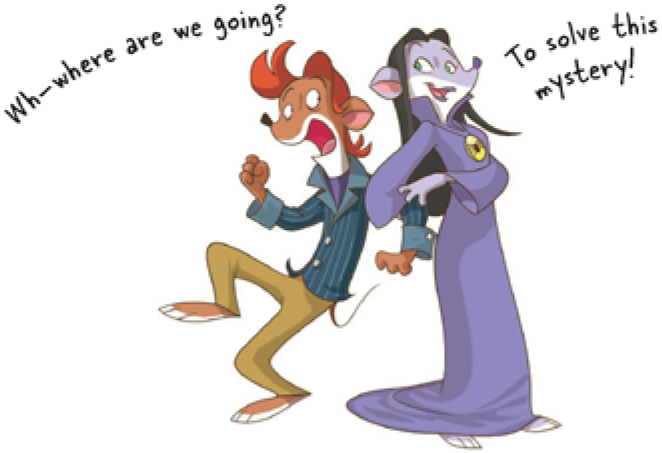

SECOND CLUE: NIGHTMARE PARK . . . MR. M.
MESSAGE
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 * 0 #

"Wh-what's Nightmare Park?" Billy asked nervously.

"It's a **FANTASTIC** place!" Creepella replied. "It's an old **amousement park** on the eastern wing of the studios. Nobody ever goes there anymore."

"So why should *we* go there?" Billy asked.

"To solve this **MYSTERY**!" she answered. She grabbed his arm and began to drag him toward the park.


Wh-where are we going?
To solve this mystery!

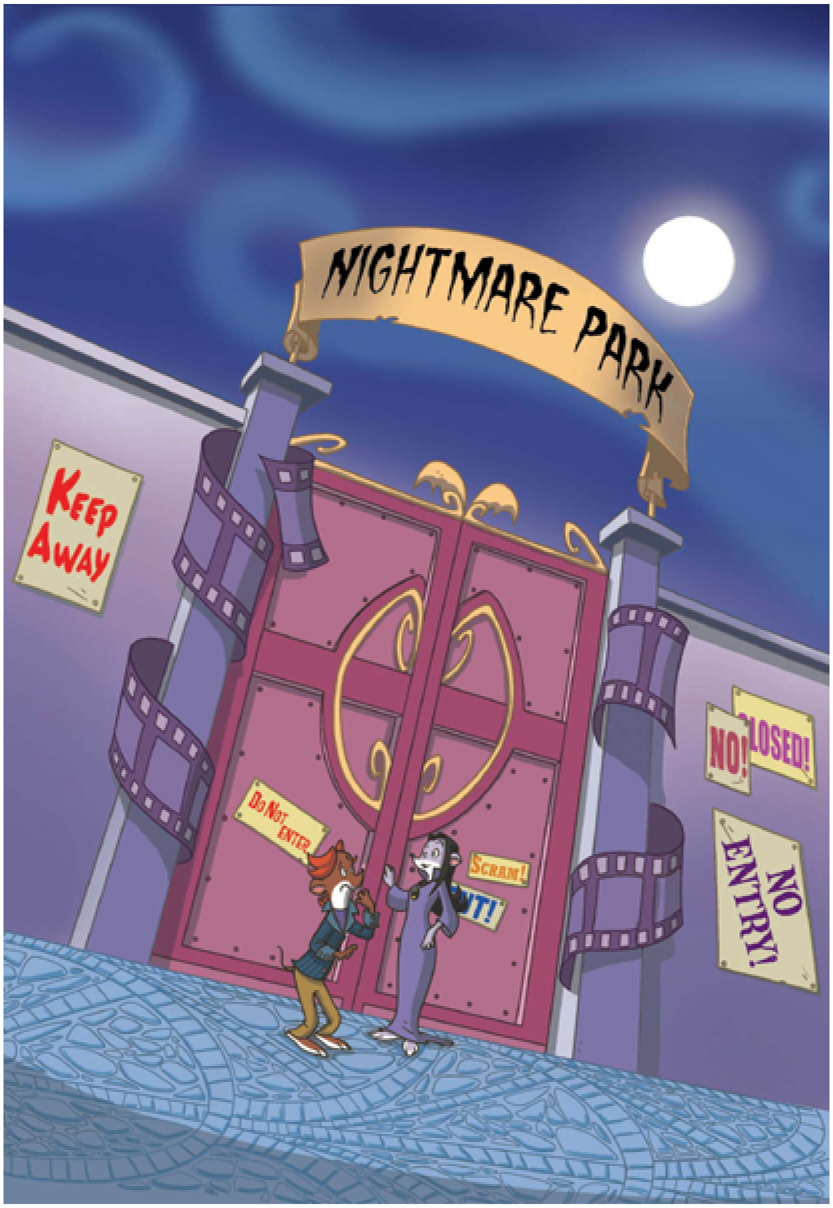
WATCH WHERE YOU PUT YOUR PAWS!

They followed the path to the east wing of Horrorwood Studios. They soon found themselves facing the huge walls of <NIGHTMARE PARK>. They pushed open the massive METAL doors, which closed behind them with a loud clang.

They looked around and saw they were in a thick FOREST. The path in front of them forked in several directions.

Billy scratched his head. "Which way do we go now?" he asked as he *LEANED* against the nearest tree.

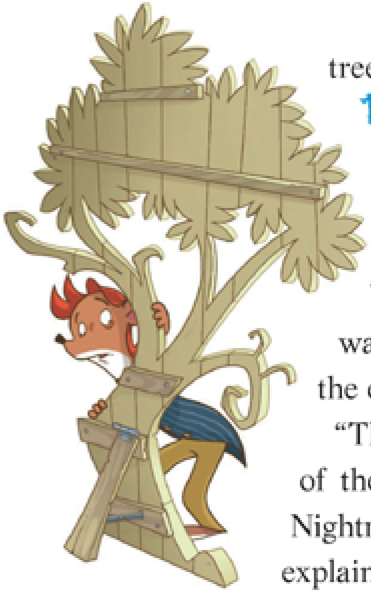
BADA BAM!


NIGHTMARE PARK
KEEP AWAY
NO!
LOSED!
DO NOT ENTER
SCRAM!
NO ENTRY!

The tree crashed to the ground. Billy grabbed helplessly at the empty air, but then he, too, fell with a thud.

"Billy, you're so clumsy!" Creepella scolded. "You toppled a prop!"

Billy stood up, dazed. "Prop?"



"These aren't real trees," she said. "They're PAINTED panels!"

"BOUNCING bookmarks!" Billy exclaimed. He looked behind another tree. It was completely flat! "Is the entire forest fake?"

"The Dark Forest was one of the biggest attractions in Nightmare Park," Creepella explained. Then she pointed.

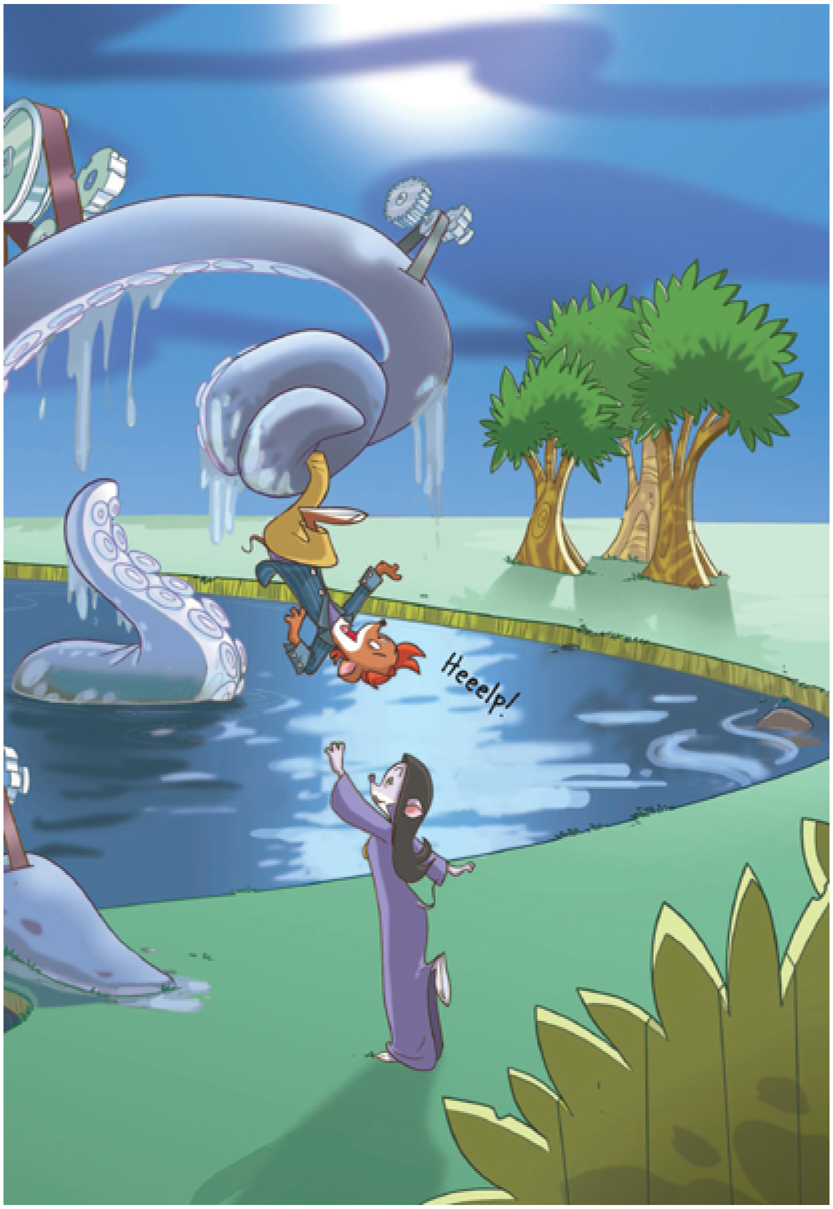
"And down there is the Black Lake! See? The water is as black as INK."

She inched closer to him. "They filmed the blockbuster *Tentacles, Tentacles* in that lake."

Frightened, Billy took a step backward. He tripped and his paw hit a BUTTON hidden between the rocks. The water in the lake began to boil and bubble. From the center of the lake, a MYSTERIOUS TENTACLE wriggled out like a giant snake. It slithered toward Billy and grabbed him by the ankle.

"Heeeeeeellllllllllpppppppp!"

Billy cried. The monstrous tentacle dangled him UPSIDE DOWN over the lake and shook him to and fro. He opened his mouth to scream again, but he froze when he found himself staring at two large, EVIL-LOOKING green eyes.


Heeelp!

"Billy, please don't waste time playing with the GIANT OCTOPUS," Creepella scolded. "We've got a mystery to solve!"

"Heeelp meeee!"

Billy screamed.

Creepella chuckled. "I'll turn it off," she said. She walked around the lake to the panel that controlled the robot octopus. She pressed the first button she saw. The octopus's tentacles began to wave faster and faster!

"I'm getting seasick!" Billy cried.

"Whoops! I'll try this one," Creepella said, pressing another BUTTON.

The octopus stopped for a moment. Then it started to tickle Billy with the tips of its tentacles. Billy couldn't stop laughing.

“Ha ha ha! Hee hee hee! Ho ho ho!”

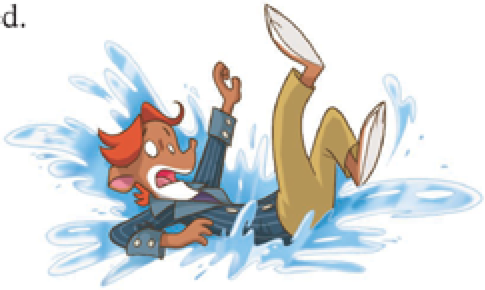
Creepella placed her hands on her hips. “This is nothing to laugh about, Billy! We’re wasting precious time!”

She impatiently pressed the third BUTTON on the panel. The octopus finally stopped moving and let go of Billy.

Splash!

Billy swam back to the shore as fast as his arms could get him there.

“Why, oh why, didn’t I stay home?” he wailed.



THE LAST CLUE

Creepella stomped away from the lake. "I can't always wait for you, Billy!" she called behind her.

"Wait!" he shouted, wringing out his **SOGGY** clothes. "Don't leave me here alone!"

He tried to catch up to her, but he tripped on something and landed once again with his snout in the **GRASS**.

"Let's try that trail," Creepella said, pointing to a narrow **GRAVEL** path. "What do you think, Billy? Billy? Where did you go?"

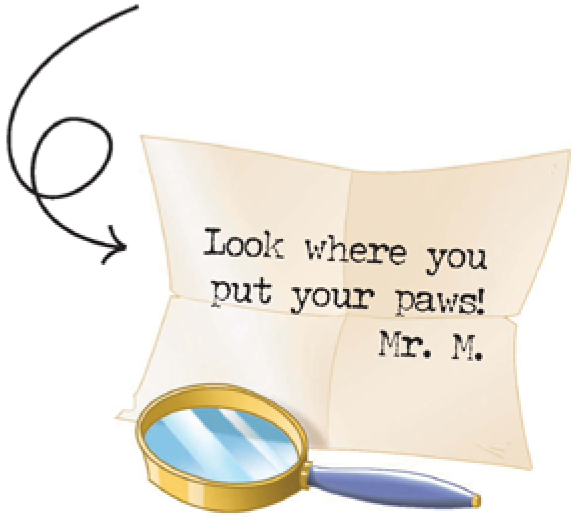
"**UMPF BFRT!**"

Billy replied through a mouthful of grass.

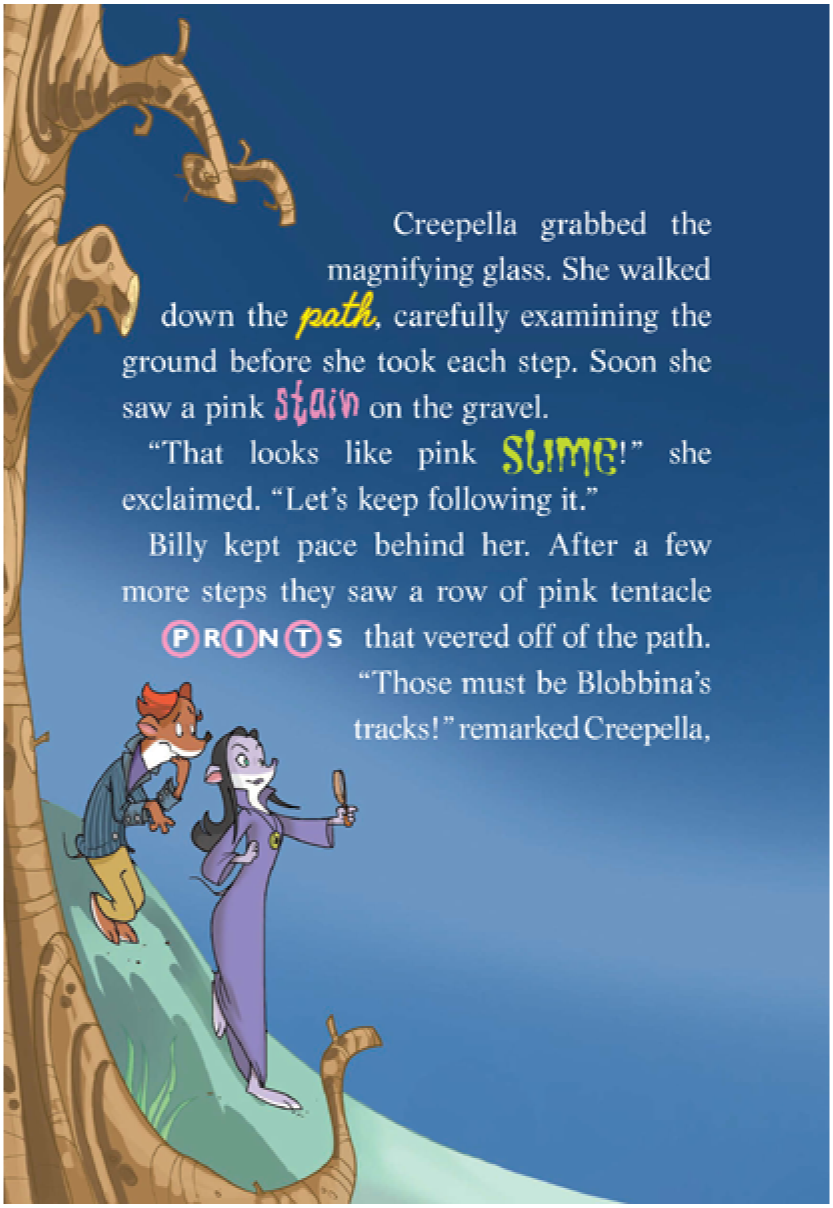
"I can't believe it! You fell again?" Creepella asked.

"Yes, but . . . pffft!" Billy spit out a clover. "I tripped on a magnifying glass. People will leave anything lying around, won't they?"

"Let me see that!" Creepella bent down. "There's a NOTE from Mr. M. here!"



Look where you
put your paws!
Mr. M.



Creepella grabbed the magnifying glass. She walked down the path, carefully examining the ground before she took each step. Soon she saw a pink stain on the gravel.

"That looks like pink SLIME!" she exclaimed. "Let's keep following it."

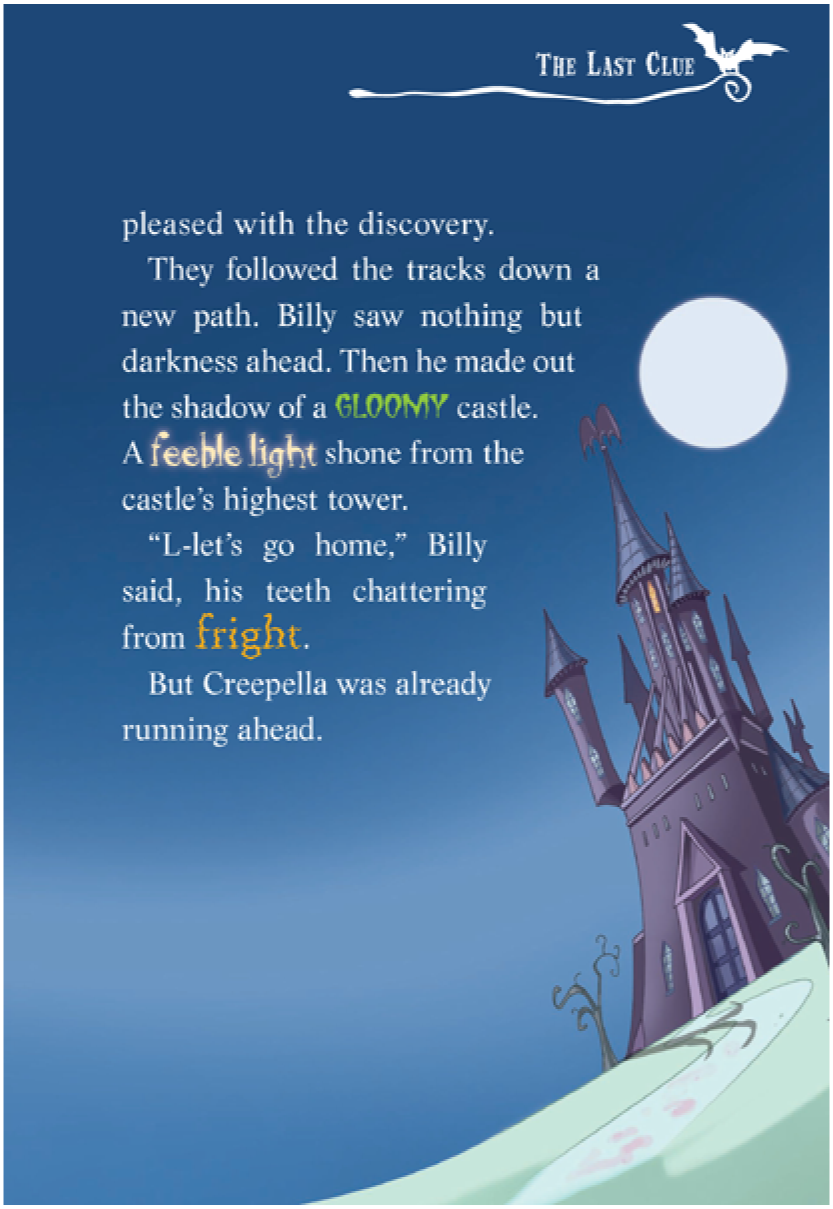
Billy kept pace behind her. After a few more steps they saw a row of pink tentacle PRINTS that veered off of the path.

"Those must be Blobbina's tracks!" remarked Creepella, pleased with the discovery.

They followed the tracks down a new path. Billy saw nothing but darkness ahead. Then he made out the shadow of a GLOOMY castle. A feeble light shone from the castle's highest tower.

"L-let's go home," Billy said, his teeth chattering from fright.

But Creepella was already running ahead.



She stopped in front of a large drawbridge that looked very unsteady. The moat below was so deep and murky that she couldn't see the bottom. Here and there, yellow SLANTED EYES peeked out of the dark water. Then the sound of chomping TEETH filled the night air.

Billy caught up to her. "Wh-what is that?" he asked.

"crocodiles, I think," Creepella replied calmly. She crossed the bridge, and Billy followed her, his tail twitching with fear.

They entered the castle. The only light inside came from the full moon shining through the windows.

"I saw a light up in the tower," Creepella said. "Let's go there!"

A long and narrow staircase led to the top.

Creepella took the steps two at a time. Billy SCRAMBLED to keep up with her, breathing heavily. Through the small windows in the tower wall he could see the forest down below.

"L-looks like we're going up very high," he said nervously. "I think we should s-stop here."

"You aren't afraid of HEIGHTS, are you, Billy-Willy?" Creepella asked. "Wait until I take you to the top of Bitewing's tower in Cacklefur Castle. The view there will take your breath away!"

"Actually . . . *puff* . . . *pant* . . . I'm already out of breath!" Billy pointed out.

They CLIMBED . . . and CLIMBED . . . and CLIMBED. Finally, they reached the room in the top of the tower. It was a small room with stone walls.

"Wh-what's that in the middle of the room?" Billy asked. "It looks like a casket!"

"In fact, it's a CASKET made of crystal," Creepella said. "Let's take a look!"

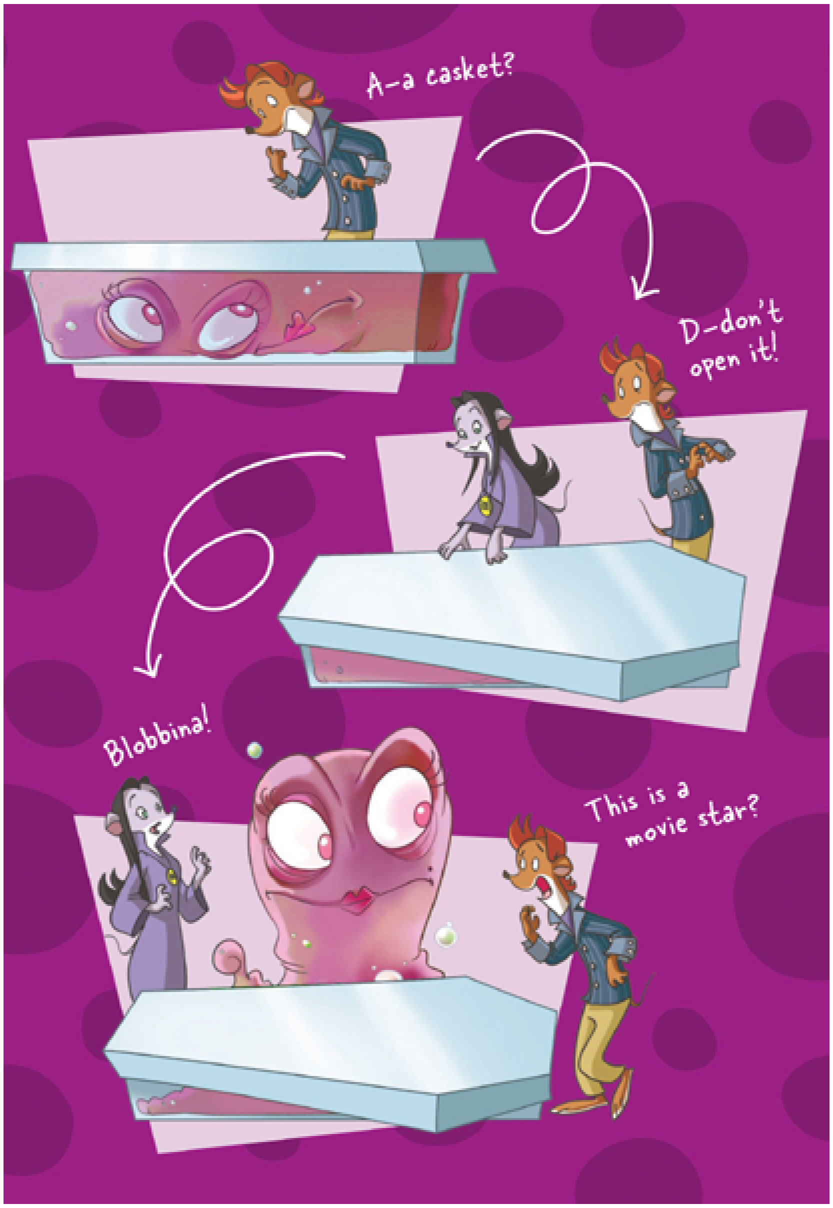
Billy looked at the see-through walls of the casket and jumped back. Two huge eyes with long EYELASHES were staring at him!

Creepella wasn't afraid. She lifted the lid of the casket and a pink GELATINOUS monster slithered out.

"BLOBBINA!" Creepella cried. "It's you!"

Billy was confused. "This is B-Blobbina? I thought we were looking for a movie star, not a monster!"

"She is a MOVIE STAR — the most MONSTROUS star in the Valley, and we've finally found her!" Creepella exclaimed happily.


A-a casket?
D-don't open it!
Blobbina!
This is a movie star?

KIDNAPPED!

Billy stepped back from the pink slime on the floor, a look of DISGUST on his face. But Creepella thought Blobbina was beautiful. She talked to the monster in her own language.

"Bluuuup! Blu blu blu bluuuuurp!"

gurgled Blobbina.

"Blurp?" asked Creepella

"Blup!" answered the monster.

Billy was astonished. "Do you really understand her?" he asked.

"OF COURSE!" Creepella replied.

"Monsterian is taught to all the children in Gloomeria at a very early age. It's tradition!"

Blobbina let out a heart-wrenching moan.

"Oh, poor thing!" Creepella exclaimed. "She told me she was KIDNAPPED by the evil Dr. Inkubus."

"D-Doctor who?" Billy stammered.

"He is the old caretaker of Nightmare Park," Creepella explained. "It used to be the star attraction of Horrorwood Studios. Oh, I remember the time I rode the marvelous

Upside-Down
Merry-Go-Round!

But the park shut down right after that."

"I'm not surprised," Billy sniffed. "It really seems like a HORRIBLE place!"

DOCTOR INKUBUS

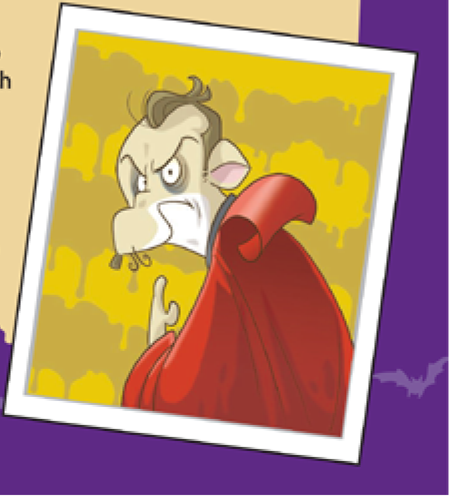
Who He Is: An expert in creating nightmares, shivers, goose bumps, and screams of fright.

Where He Lives: Since the park closed, he hides in a dark and secret corner of Horrorwood Studios. It is said he only comes out at night.

Education: He has a degree from Shivery Arts Academy. He majored in Screams, Shrieks, and Screeches.

Hobby: He collects recordings of the most bloodcurdling screams in horror films.

His Dream: To bring Nightmare Park back to its original splendor, with the same hair-raising attractions it had years ago.



"On the contrary, the horribleness of the place was a big draw," Creepella said. "But after a few years, people stopped getting scared. So the park was abandoned."

Blobbina interrupted her.

"Bluppp blurpt blu blub!"

"She said Dr. Inkubus dreams of reopening the park," Creepella translated.

"Blup bluup blu!"

"And he wants to force Blobbina to be the main attraction!" Creepella finished.

"Blup!" moaned Blobbina. A pink TEAR ran down her cheek.

"Poor thing," Creepella said. "She belongs on the big screen, not IMPRISONED in an amousement park! We need to get her out of here!"

Creepella quickly dialed Cacklefur Castle on her cell phone.

"Boneham! There's an **EMERGENCY**!" she said. "Hurry to NIGHTMARE PARK'S entrance. And bring the sidecar. You know, the one we use to bring Gorgo to the SWAMP."

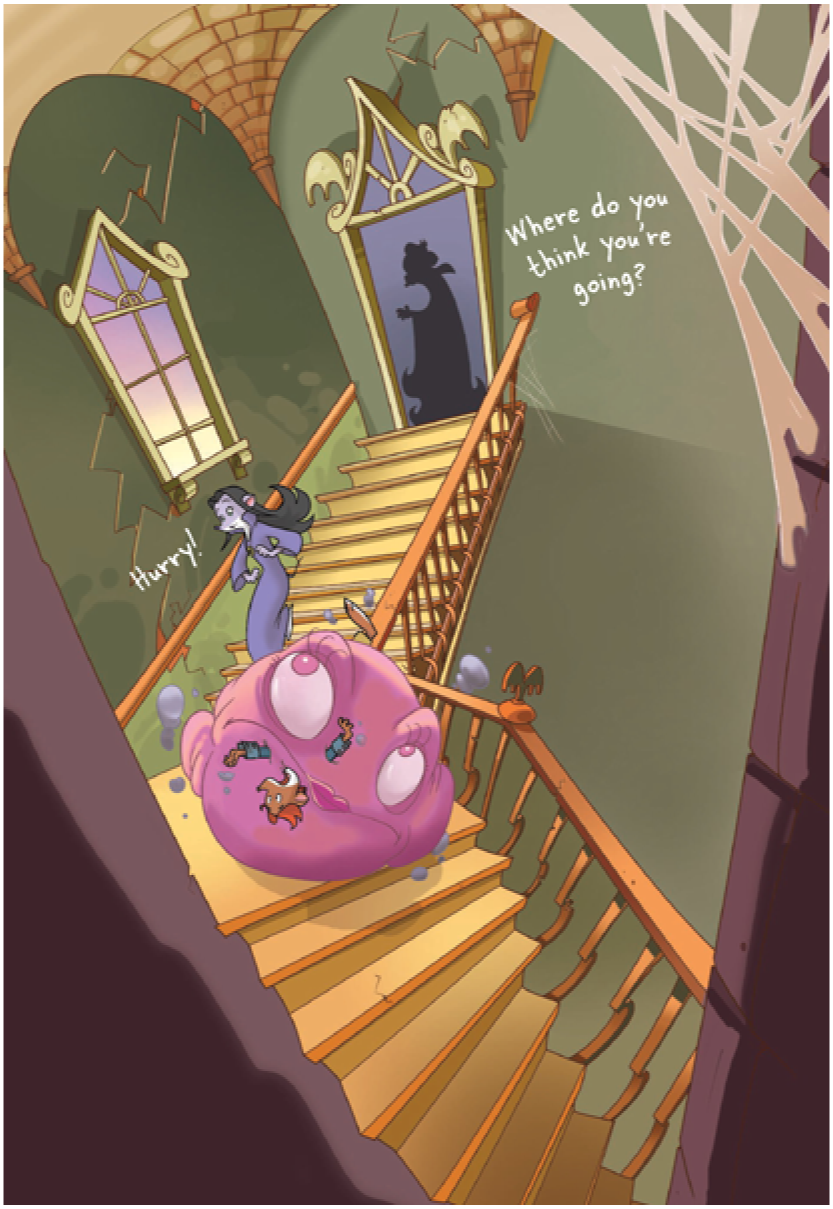
She ended the call and turned to Billy. "We have to get out of here! You go first, Blobbina will follow you, and I'll bring up the rear."

"Where do you think you're going?"

Creepella turned and saw the SKELETAL shadow of Dr. Inkubus behind them.

"*HE'S ONTO US!*" she cried.

Blobbina slithered faster and bumped into Billy. The two of them rolled down the stairs together in a blur of PINK SLIME. Only Billy's head and paws peeked out from the gelatinous goo.

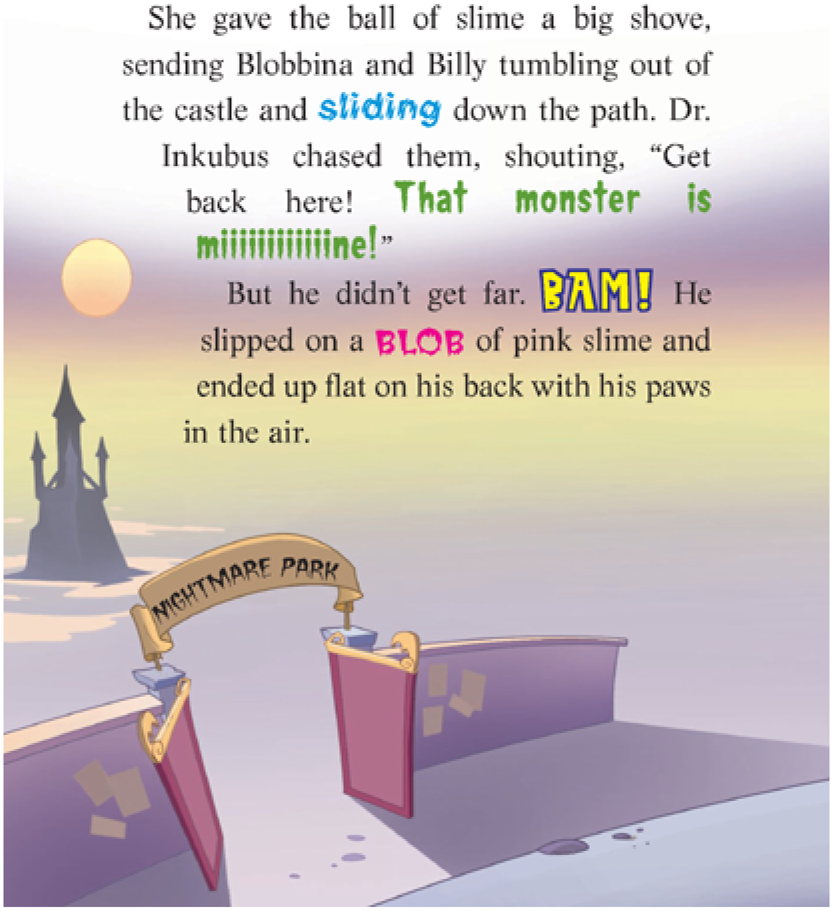

Where do you think you're going?
Hurry!

Creepella ran after them.

"**HURRY!**" she yelled.

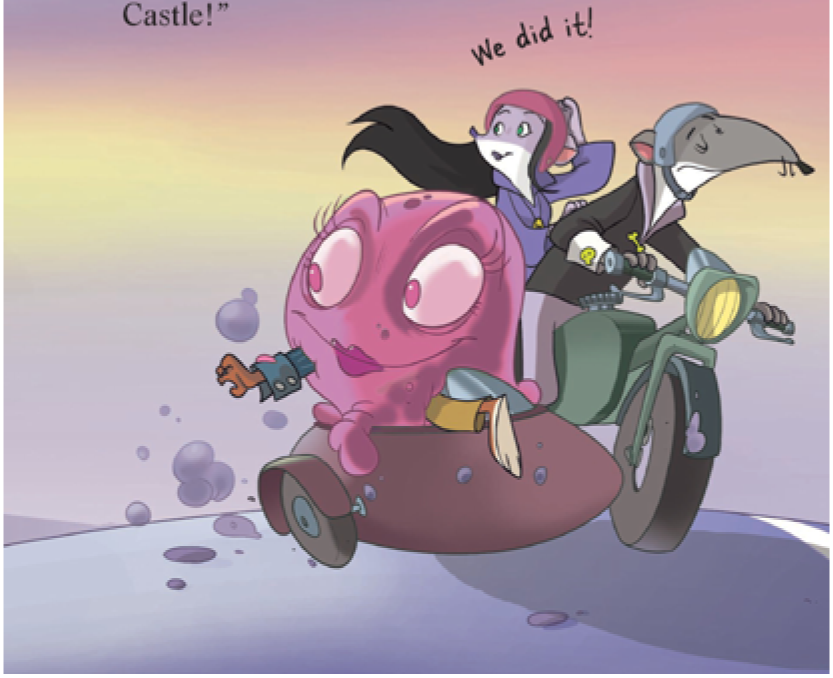
She gave the ball of slime a big shove, sending Blobbina and Billy tumbling out of the castle and **sliding** down the path. Dr. Inkubus chased them, shouting, "Get back here! **That monster is miiiiiiiiiiiine!**"

But he didn't get far. **BAM!** He slipped on a **BLOB** of pink slime and ended up flat on his back with his paws in the air.



The strange trio arrived at the park entrance to find Boneham on a motorcycle, honking the horn **loudly**. Creepella pushed the pink monster into the sidecar and jumped on the seat. Billy was still stuck inside the glob of pink **GOO**!

"Step on it!" Creepella yelled. "To Cacklefur Castle!"



WEDDING BELLS AT CACKLEFUR CASTLE

The sun was rising over the HORIZON, brightening the sky over Mysterious Valley when Boneham's motorcycle stopped in front of Cacklefur Castle. He honked the horn several times, and the von Cacklefur family all came outside.

"Welcome back, Creepella!"

Bitewing cried. He pointed his wings toward Blobbina. "What is that weird creature?"

"It's Blobbina! We found her!" Creepella told everyone. "She was kidnapped by Dr. Inkubus."

"How unusual," said Boris von Cacklefur.

"Blobbina has a rodent's whiskers and a tail."

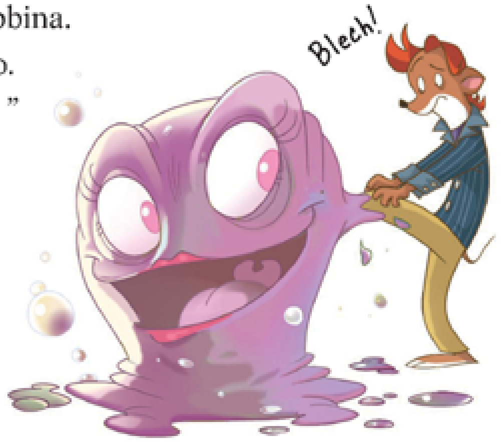
"Oh, that's just silly Billy Squeakspeare," Creepella explained. "Blobbina fell on him and he got trapped."

"BLECH!" shrieked Billy, as he set himself free from the slimy pink monster.

Then the moat began to BUBBLE. Two surprised love-struck eyes stared out of the mud at Blobbina.

It was Gorgo.

"Bluur!" gurgled Gorgo happily when he saw Blobbina.



"Blirp!" Blobbina answered, batting her eyelashes.

Grandma Crypt sighed loudly and held her hands over her heart.

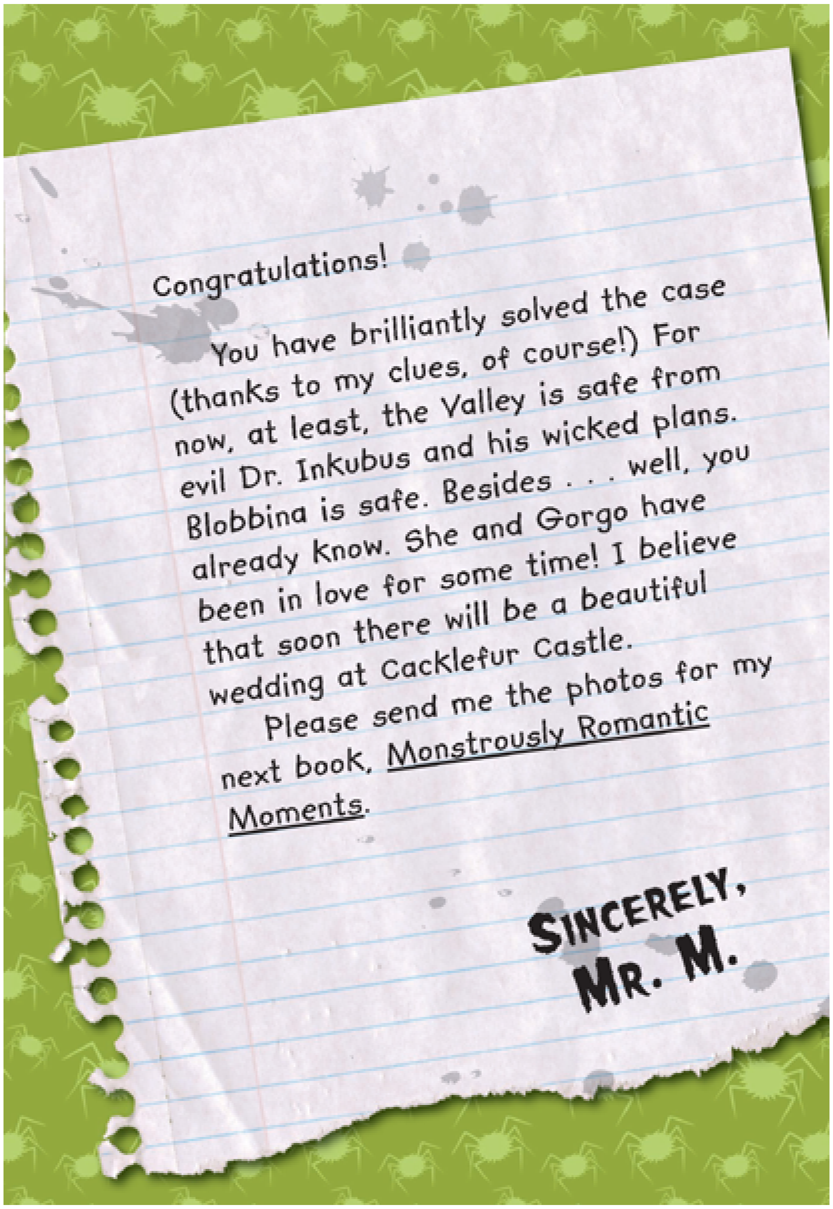
"AH, LOVE. . ."

Boris nodded. "The two of them are made for each other. Just look at them!"

Shivereen ran to Creepella, holding a piece of paper. "Auntie, this just arrived! It's from **Mr. M.**"

Billy took a STEP BACKWARD. "W-well, it's time for me to go," he said. But a PAW grabbed him by the sleeve.

"No, no, my Billy-Willy," said Creepella. "You can't leave now. You have to stay here for the **rehearsal**!"

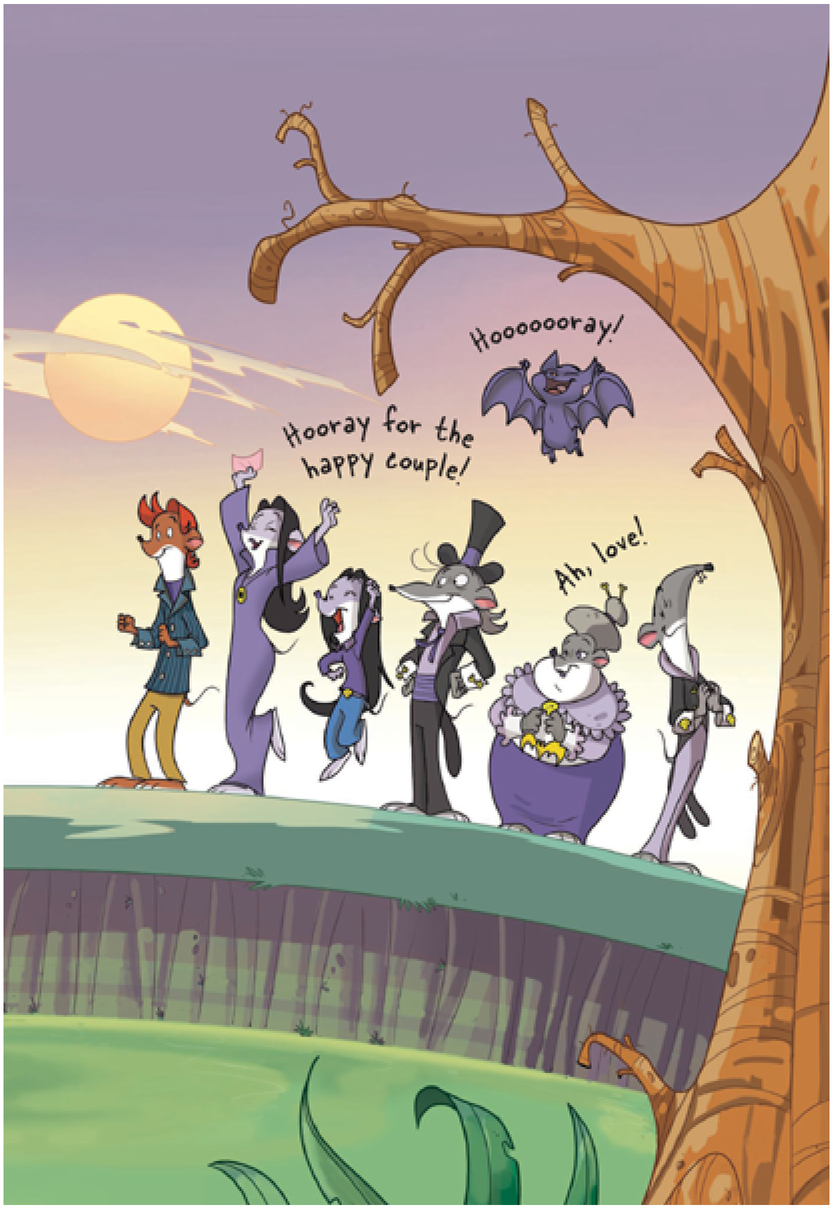


Congratulations!

You have brilliantly solved the case (thanks to my clues, of course!) For now, at least, the Valley is safe from evil Dr. Inkubus and his wicked plans. Blobbina is safe. Besides . . . well, you already know. She and Gorgo have been in love for some time! I believe that soon there will be a beautiful wedding at Cacklefur Castle.

Please send me the photos for my next book, Monstrously Romantic Moments.

SINCERELY,
MR. M.


Hooooooray!
Hooray for the happy couple!
Ah, love!

"R-rehearsal?" Billy stammered.

"Yes, the wedding rehearsal," Creepella said. "You can be Gorgo's BEST MAN, and I'll be Blobbina's maid of honor!"

Billy fainted on the spot, but the ring of his cell phone quickly woke him up. The Rattenbaum triplets had left him a message.

"Bobby, where are you?" they whined. "We got you a part in the movie. You have to lower yourself by the thread of a Spider's Web into the Bottomless Well! Aren't you happy?"

Billy fainted again. Meanwhile, Grandpa Frankenstein brought a pail filled with old, RUSTED screws to the moat.

"Our GORGO seems happy now," he said. "But let's test just to make sure."

He threw the pail of rusty screws into the moat. Gorgo gobbled up every last one. He ate everything but the handle, which was too clean and new for him. He spit it out — and it hit Billy right in the face! The poor writer, who was just beginning to come to, **fainted** for the third time.

“**Gorgo is better!**”

Creepella cheered. “It’s a happy ending to a scary story — the perfect story to send to my friend *Geronimo Stilton*!”

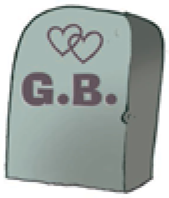
THE END

THE NEWEST SENSATION IN HORROR!

After I finished reading Creepella's book, Bitewing chuckled.

"Good story, right? So, did you figure out who's getting married?" the bat asked me.

"Of course," I answered. "The two MONSTERS of Mysterious Valley: Gorgo and Blobbina!"



"Exactly!" the bat snickered. "That's why I brought you this tombstone-shaped WEDDING invitation. You're invited! Are you ready to go?"

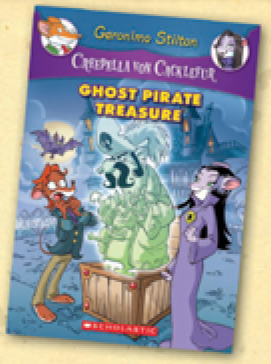
"Hmm . . . a wedding between monsters?"

I said with a shiver. "Brrr! My whiskers are curling from fright!"

Bitewing fluttered around my head. "No excuses! The trip is already booked. But before you go, you have to publish this **BOOK** . . . ***PRONTO!*** In fact, Creepella's already working on her next one."

I couldn't argue with the bat. It's clear to me that Mysterious Valley is home to a truly fabumouse author of **SCARY STORIES** . . .

CREEPELLA VON CACKLEFUR!

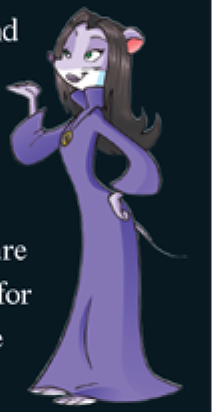

Geronimo Stilton
Creepella von Cacklefur
GHOST PIRATE TREASURE
SCHOLASTIC

If you liked this book, be sure to check out my next adventure!

GHOST PIRATE TREASURE

Oh, no! Billy Squeakspeare has a big problem, and he needs Creepella's help. Someone's been digging holes around Squeakspeare Mansion at night, and Billy wants to find out who it is. The dangerous, legendary pirate Morgan Darkwhisker is said to have buried his long-lost treasure near Squeakspeare Mansion years ago—could he be hunting for his hidden riches? It's up to Billy and Creepella to find the treasure first!

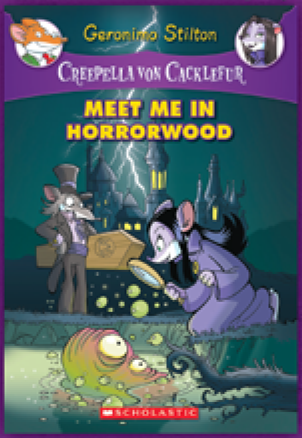
Meet CREEPELLA VON CACKLEFUR



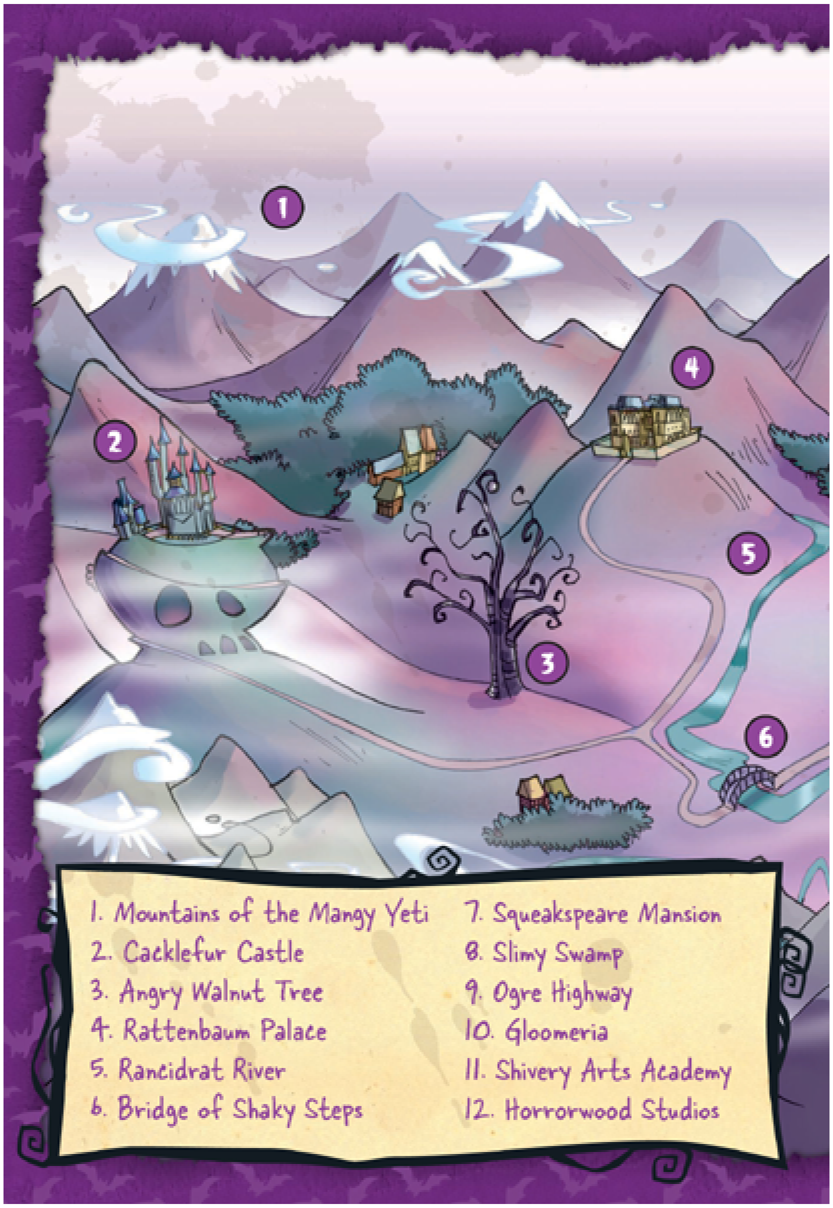
I, *Geronimo Stilton*, have a lot of mouse friends, but none as **spooky** as my friend CREEPELLA VON CACKLEFUR! She is an enchanting and MYSTERIOUS mouse with a pet bat named **Bitewing**. YIKES! I'm a real 'fraidy mouse, but even I think CREEPELLA and her family are AWFULLY fascinating. I can't wait for you to read all about CREEPELLA in these fa-mouse-ly funny and **spectacularly spooky** tales!

Geronimo Stilton
Creepella von Cacklefur
THE THIRTEEN GHOSTS
SCHOLASTIC

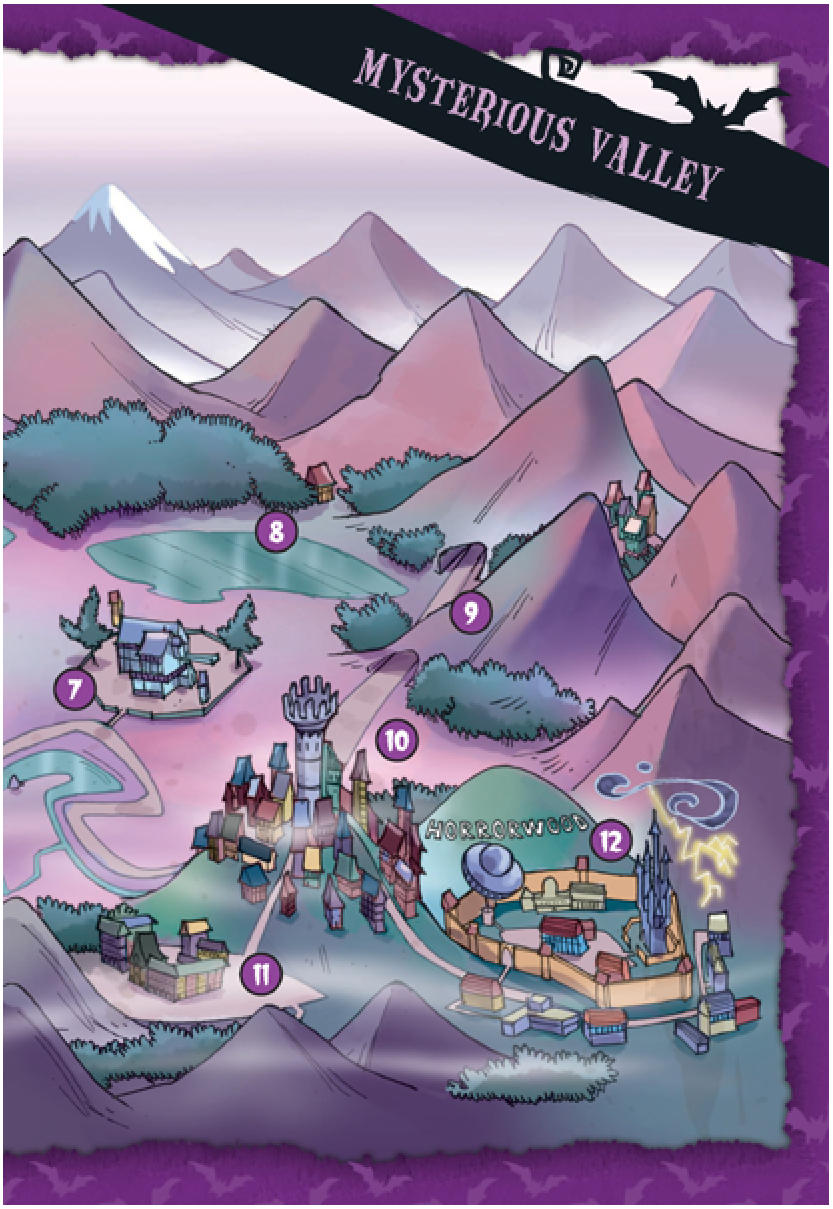
#1 THE THIRTEEN GHOSTS


Geronimo Stilton
Creepella von Cacklefur
MEET ME IN HORRORWOOD
SCHOLASTIC

#2 MEET ME IN HORRORWOOD



1. Mountains of the Mangy Yeti
2. Cacklefur Castle
3. Angry Walnut Tree
4. Rattenbaum Palace
5. Rancidrat River
6. Bridge of Shaky Steps
7. Squeakspeare Mansion
8. Slimy Swamp
9. Ogre Highway
10. Gloomeria
11. Shivery Arts Academy
12. Horrorwood Studios


MYSTERIOUS VALLEY
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HORRORWOOD
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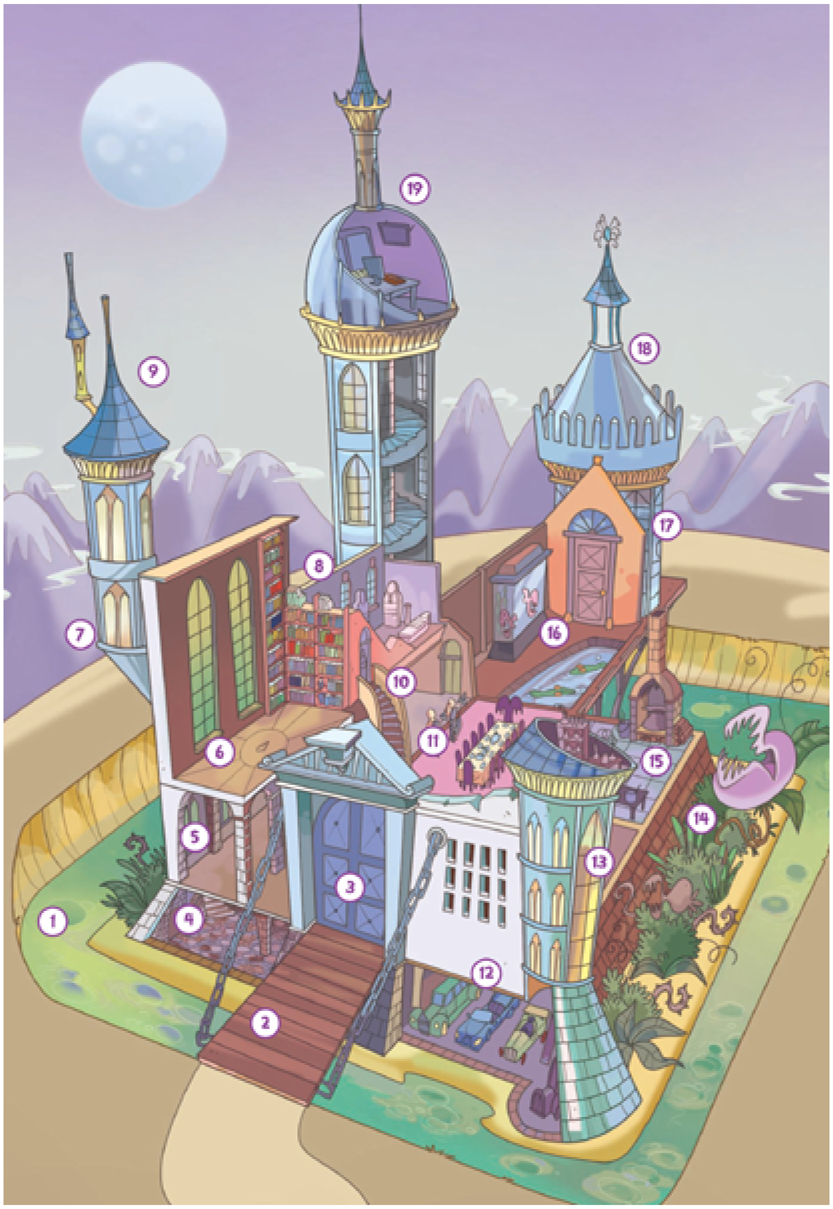
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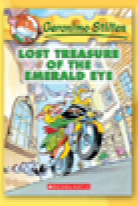
CACKLEFUR CASTLE

1. Oozing moat
2. Drawbridge
3. Grand entrance
4. Moldy basement
5. Patio, with a view of the moat
6. Dusty library
7. Room for unwanted guests
8. Mummy room
9. Watchtower
10. Creaking staircase
11. Banquet room
12. Garage (for antique hearses)
13. Bewitched tower
14. Garden of carnivorous plants
15. Stinky kitchen
16. Crocodile pool and piranha tank
17. Creepella's room
18. Tower of musky tarantulas
19. Bitewing's tower (with antique contraptions)

Don't miss any of my other fabumouse adventures!


Geronimo Stilton
LOST TREASURE OF THE EMERALD EYE

#1 Lost Treasure of the Emerald Eye

Geronimo Stilton
THE CURSE OF THE CHEESE PYRAMID

#2 The Curse of the Cheese Pyramid

Geronimo Stilton
CAT AND MOUSE IN A HAUNTED HOUSE

#3 Cat and Mouse in a Haunted House

Geronimo Stilton
I'M TOO FOND OF MY FUR!

#4 I'm Too Fond of My Fur!

Geronimo Stilton
FOUR MICE DEEP IN THE JUNGLE

#5 Four Mice Deep in the Jungle

Geronimo Stilton
PAWS OFF, CHEDDARFACE!

#6 Paws Off, Cheddarface!

Geronimo Stilton
RED PIZZAS FOR A BLUE COUNT

#7 Red Pizzas for a Blue Count

Geronimo Stilton
ATTACK OF THE BANDIT CATS

#8 Attack of the Bandit Cats

Geronimo Stilton
A FABUMOUSE VACATION FOR GERONIMO

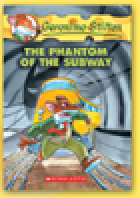
#9 A Fabumouse Vacation for Geronimo

Geronimo Stilton
ALL BECAUSE OF A CUP OF COFFEE

#10 All Because of a Cup of Coffee

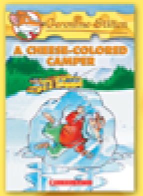
#11 It's Halloween, You 'Fraidy Mouse!

#12 Merry Christmas, Geronimo!


#13 The Phantom of the Subway

#14 The Temple of the Ruby of Fire

#15 The Mona Mousa Code


#16 A Cheese-Colored Camper

#17 Watch Your Whiskers, Stilton!

#18 Shipwreck on the Pirate Islands

#19 My Name Is Stilton, Geronimo Stilton

#20 Surf's Up, Geronimo!

#21 The Wild, Wild West

#22 The Secret of Cacklefur Castle

A Christmas Tale

#23 Valentine's Day Disaster

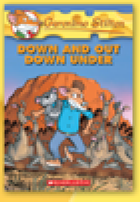
#24 Field Trip to Niagara Falls

#25 The Search for Sunken Treasure

#26 The Mummy with No Name

#27 The Christmas Toy Factory

#28 Wedding Crasher

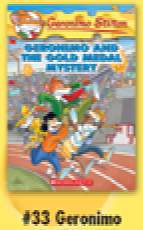

#29 Down and Out Down Under

#30 The Mouse Island Marathon

#31 The Mysterious Cheese Thief

Christmas Catastrophe

#32 Valley of the Giant Skeletons



#33 Geronimo and the Gold Medal Mystery

#34 Geronimo Stilton, Secret Agent

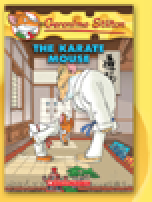
#35 A Very Merry Christmas

#36 Geronimo's Valentine

#37 The Race Across America

#38 A Fabumouse School Adventure

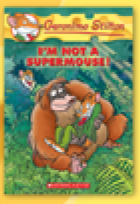
#39 Singing Sensation



#40 The Karate Mouse

#41 Mighty Mount Kilimanjaro

#42 The Peculiar Pumpkin Thief



#43 I'm Not a Supermouse!

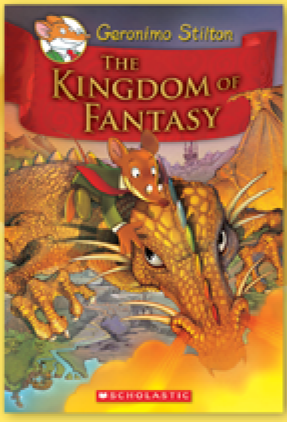
#44 The Giant Diamond Robbery

#45 Save the White Whale!

#46 The Haunted Castle

#47 Run for the Hills, Geronimo!

Don't miss these very special editions!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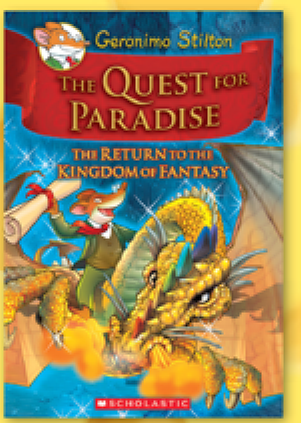
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The Return to the Kingdom of Fantasy
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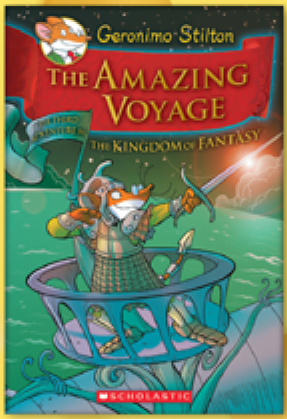
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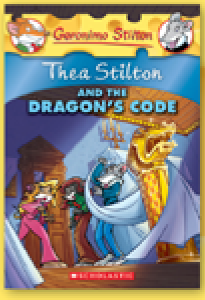
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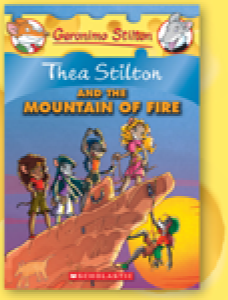
THEA STILTON
AND THE
DRAGON'S CODE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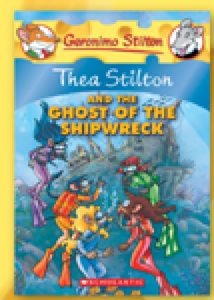
THEA STILTON
AND THE
MOUNTAIN OF FIRE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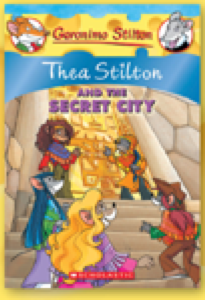
AND THE GHOST OF
THE SHIPWRECK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AND THE
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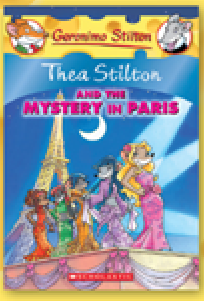
AND THE
SECRET CITY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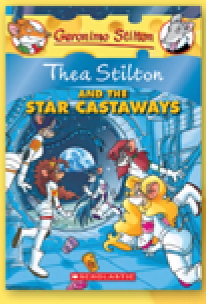
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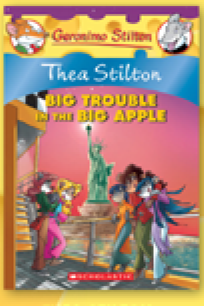
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BIG TROUBLE
IN THE BIG APPLE
SCHOLASTIC

THEA STILTON:
BIG TROUBLE IN
THE BIG APPLE

DEAR MOUSE FRIENDS,
GOOD-BYE UNTIL
THE NEXT BOOK!

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